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[No. 251]

THE PROOF OF IMMORTALITY

BY

REV. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

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THE PROOF OF IMMORTALITY

"The ungodly say within themselves, short and sorrowful is our life, and there is no healing when a man cometh to his end, neither was any man known to return from the grave. Thus reasoned they, and they were led astray, their own ignorance hath blinded them. For God created man to be immortal."

WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

To one who is acquainted with the literature of immortality, no argument for the reality of the eternal life is so familiar as that which is based upon the universality of the belief. All men, it is argued, have always believed in the immortality of the human soul. The very universality of this great faith in the history of the human race, its very persistence in the face of every doubt and every denial, its repeated resurrection in the hearts of men after its entombment by the atheistical philosopher or the materialistic scientist,— all this is the best of proof that the immortal life is not futile superstition, but a faith corresponding with reality. Thus Dr. Charles F. Dole, in his Ingersoll lecture on "Immortality," states that "the presence and prevalence of this idea of immortality in such a world as this is a most wonderful thing. It is wonderful if the spiritual interpretation of the universe is true. But it is more wonderful, if this is only a material world and if the idea of immortality has not a shred of reality behind it." And in this statement he finds

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one of his strongest arguments for what he calls "the hope of immortality."

I should be one of the last to question the validity of this contention. Dr. Dole is perfectly right when he lays emphasis upon the unusual and persistent character of man's faith in the eternal life, and hints that it is impossible to explain this faith, "if this is only a material world and the idea of immortality has not a shred of reality behind it." But even as I am swept away by this great argument, and born, as if on wings of knowledge, to the glowing empyrean of conviction, I find myself caught back to earth by the sudden realization of the fact that if certain men have cherished this great hope through all the ages, other men have also denied it. If there have always been those who have asserted, with the author of the Wisdom of Solomon, that "God created man to be immortal," it is no less true that there have always been those who have declared, "that there is no healing when a man cometh to his end, neither was any man known to return from the grave." Nor have these sceptics always been the "ungodly," as he rashly asserts, or those whom "their own ignorance hath blinded." On the contrary, these doubters have often been the purest and noblest of men, and often, too, men of transcendent intellectual power and far-reaching knowledge. Indeed, I recall that, at those very moments in human history when the immortal hope was given its clearest expression and its most rational justification, there were present those who doubted or disbelieved. Thus you remember that wonderful scene in the Athenian prison-chamber, when Socrates said farewell to his friends and disciples, on the last morning of his life. About the

condemned philosopher there is an air of deep composure and serene content. He faces death in cheerfulness and confidence, and, amid these most solemn circumstances of his departure, bears quiet testimony to his perfect faith in immortality. "Did I not think," he said, "that I should go to dwell in the company not only of gods wise and good, but also of men that have died better than these here on earth, I should be wrong in not feeling sorry at my approaching death. But as it is, be assured that I trust to join the society not only of good men, but that I shall go to abide with God." But this very statement of his abiding trust, you remember, only awakens the doubts and fears of his disciples. They beg that he will not depart, keeping this belief wholly to himself, they plead that he will share with them the reasons for his faith; and, in spite of his affirmation, they give pathetic expression to their fears that the soul will perish at the moment of death, vanishing away like smoke that is dissipated in the empty air.— Again, I recall that St. Paul, after two years of constant teaching in the city of Corinth,— after preaching during all of that period, to his little group of followers there, the new gospel of the resurrection,— went away on the journey to other cities of the Gentiles, only to leave doubt and denial behind him. And I recall that it was the teachings of those persons who asserted that "there is no resurrection of the dead," which inspired that great passage in the Apostle's first letter to the Corinthians, which constitutes one of the most wonderful statements of the immortal hope that ever came from the mind of man.— And, most extraordinary of all, am I forced to remember that, when

Jesus of Nazareth was bidding farewell to his disciples, on the last night of his existence, and discoursing to them "of the resurrection and the life," there were those present, even in the little group of the twelve, who, like Philip did not understand, and those present also who, like Thomas doubted and denied.— In short, a candid survey of human experience and an unprejudiced study of the history of human thought, shows that man's persistent doubt upon this question of immortality is almost as impressive as man's persistent faith, and that for every hope within the human breast that the eternal life is a reality, there is a corresponding fear that it is a delusion.

At no time in the history of human thought, perhaps, has the doubt of the reality of the immortal life been more general than at the present moment, and the explanation of this prevalent doubt of our own age and generation is the explanation of man's doubts through all the ages. We are living in what it has become a commonplace to call an age of science, and by science we mean of course nothing more nor less than ordered knowledge. Our age is one of careful investigation, of accurate demonstration, and of exact truth. The scientist has turned his telescope toward the immeasurable spaces of the heavens, and there, by patient watching through the long hours of the night, has discovered and formulated the laws of planetary motion, and has proved the reality of these laws by a reasoning so exact that he can prophesy a certain conjunction of the stars a century hence to the very hour and minute. The scientist has turned his microscope toward the earth upon which we tread, and by careful

analysis of the composition of matter, has revealed and formulated the laws of chemical affinity, and proved the reality of these laws by a demonstration so exact that he can foretell the immediate consequence of any given combination of chemical elements. The physicist, with his weights and balances, his mirrors and candles, his tubes and wires, has investigated the problems of physical energy as manifested in the various forms of heat, light, electricity, and magnetism, and by experiments of the greatest delicacy, has proved the reality of his laws of motion, refracted light, and specific gravity. In short, we are living in an age so dominated by the methods and the ideals of physical science, that we have come to identify knowledge with physical demonstration, and to define reality as that which can be seen and felt and heard, analyzed and tested and proved. We refuse to accept anything as real which cannot be subjected to actual physical experiment. We decline to believe anything to be true which cannot be proved by mathematics, as planetary motion can be proved,— by analysis and experiment, as chemical affinities can be proved,— by exact measurements of weight, or degrees of heat, or rate of motion, as the laws of physical energy can be proved. We ask for proof, for demonstration, for experimental verification, of our beliefs,— and if this proof is not forthcoming, we refuse to be convinced. The attitude of our generation is that which finds its consistent and noblest embodiment in the person of the agnostic, Thomas Huxley, who gave it as the working principle of his life,—" In matters of the intellect, do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable,"

or, still better, in his "Essay on Agnosticism and Christianity,"—"It is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition, unless he can produce the proof which logically justifies that certainty."

Now it is this very matter of proof, or demonstration, which is before us for discussion. And let us admit, at the very outset, that, from the point of view of this modern scientific principle of demonstration, we must give up all idea of proving the reality of the immortal life. "We must surrender at the start," says Dr. George A. Gordon, in his treatise on "Immortality and the New Theodicy," "all hope of demonstration." And this, for the very simple and very obvious reason, that the life beyond the grave does not lie within the range of our present conscious experience. Scientific proof has to do with what can be experienced through the medium of our bodily senses. The astronomer can prove his laws of planetary motion because he can see the stars, watch their movements, time their progress, measure their distances, and mark the directions of their motion; the chemist can prove his laws of chemical affinity, because he can actually put the chemical elements in a test tube and watch with his own eyes the resulting precipitation; the physicist can prove his laws of heat and light and electricity, because he can actually measure the volume of his steam, watch the refraction of his light rays, and test the power of his electric current. All of these phenomena, as I have said, form a part of our conscious experience and hence are susceptible of proof. The immortal life, however, if there be any such reality, is by the very nature of its being beyond

the conscious experience of the present life. It cannot be seen, it cannot be heard, it cannot be studied, and therefore its real existence cannot be proved. "It is entirely without foundation in experience," says John Fiske, in his "Life Everlasting." "Our powers of conception are narrowly determined by the limits of our experience, and when that experience has never furnished us with the materials for framing a conception, we simply cannot frame it." All hope, therefore, of proving immortality, as the scientist proves his laws and facts of physical phenomena, by actual experiment and verification in the world of visible experience must be at once abandoned. In spite of our psychical investigators, we must agree, in our present state of knowledge, with Dr. Gordon that "We must surrender at the start all hope of demonstration."

In spite of the truth of this assertion, however, I am now going to assert just the opposite thing, and state, with all possible emphasis, that I believe in immortality; and believe because it is my conviction that immortality can be scientifically proved. Here surely would seem to be a paradox,— here an out-and-out contradiction! Here, you say, is the clergyman in the pulpit, in accordance with the unvarying habit of his profession, going as far as he dares, and then, because of the very necessities of his position, throwing his reason overboard and taking refuge in blind, unreasoning faith. Here I am agreeing at one moment with Dr. Gordon and Dr. Fiske, that scientific demonstration of immortality is impossible, and then at the next moment boldly asserting that I believe in immortality because it can be proved! Surely it would seem as though

I were assuming the classic attitude of Tertullian, who said of the doctrine of the Trinity, that he believes it just because it was impossible of belief,— a pious statement, but hardly convincing! But to my mind, there is no such contradiction in my attitude as might at first appear, and this for the simple reason that modern science, in its present methods of operation, employs two perfectly distinct kinds of proof, or demonstration; and when I say, with Dr. Gordon and Dr. Fiske that proof of immortality is impossible, I am thinking of one kind of proof, and when I assert, on the other hand, that I believe in immortality because proof is possible, I am thinking of the other kind of proof. Let me see if I can make this matter clear by illustration.

I have already defined that kind of proof which concerns itself with actual experience,— the demonstration of the astronomer who sees the stars, of the chemist who watches his test tube precipitate, of the physicist who measures his heat and light,— the kind of proof by which the demonstration of immortality is impossible. Let me now define that other kind of scientific proof which demonstrates truth not by direct experience, but by inference from what *is* experienced to that which cannot in the nature of things be experienced. This kind of proof, the proof of logical inference, as it is called, is just as valid and just as frequently employed by modern science, if we only realized it, as the other and better known kind of proof of which I have spoken; and it is this which I believe makes it possible for us to establish the reality of the immortal life by logical demonstration.— For example, all scientists believe to-day that the atmosphere which is all

about us is filled with a certain material substance which they have agreed to call "ether,"— a material substance, and yet a substance so delicate that it is invisible to the eye and imperceptible to the touch. We cannot see the ether, nor hear it, nor touch it; it is utterly beyond the range of our present conscious experience; and yet we know that it is there! And why? By the proof of inference. We know that the "ether" is present in the atmosphere, because the phenomenon of light, which we can see and feel in actual experience, makes its existence an absolute necessity. We know, that is, by actual experiment, that light moves in waves like the waves of the sea. This being established, the question at once arises,— waves of what? The ocean waves are made of water, sound waves of air, and light waves — of what? They cannot be of air, or water, or any form of matter as we know it, for, to our senses, the atmosphere seems absolutely empty. And yet, the moving waves of light cannot be waves of nothing! — They must be waves of something,— of some material substance! And therefore do the scientists state, because of the observed motion of light, that they know that there exists in the atmosphere a substance, which is invisible, inaudible, intangible, and yet is as real as anything that can be seen or heard or touched; and this substance they call "ether." From corner to corner of all this vast universe, that is, wherever a star shines or light darts, there broods this vast circumambient "ether." The universe is soaked in it, as a sponge is soaked in water. It cannot be seen or touched or heard or smelled,— it is simply outside the possible range of our experience,— and yet we know that it is

there by the *proof of inference.* The phenomenon of light, which is visible, makes the reality of this "ether," which is invisible, a rational certainty. No sane man thinks of doubting its existence because it cannot be demonstrated in experience, any more than he would think of doubting the existence of the sun.

Again, up to within a comparatively few years ago, it was believed, by the chemists of the day, that the ultimate analysis of matter was into some seventy odd elements which they could see and feel and with which they could experiment — the elements, that is, the existence of which could be demonstrated in actual experience. Within the last few years, however, it has been discovered, by means of certain experiments with heated gases, that further analysis is necessary; that these elements are themselves resolvable into certain other elements. It is, of course, impossible for me to explain here the astonishing details of the new chemical investigations of our time, even though I had any knowledge of their details. It is sufficient for my purpose to point out, that the chemists of our day, by such experiments as I have mentioned, have discovered the existence of one class of particles which they call ions, and another class which they call corpuscles; and that they have discovered the existence of these particles and proved their reality, in spite of the fact that, like the "ether," they are invisible and intangible,— utterly beyond the range even of microscopic vision. These ions and corpuscles are utterly unseen, and yet the chemists know that they are there. And they know by inference,— know because, if they were not there, certain properties of known gases

and substances, which are observed in actual experience, were otherwise impossible. They know, for instance, that a certain heated gas possesses the quality of conductivity; they know that this quality could not exist if the gas were not composed of these invisible corpuscles; and therefore they say, we know that the corpuscles are really there, even though we can never hope to see them or experience them in any way. That which lies utterly beyond the range of all possible experience, that is, we know to be a *reality* by necessary inference from the known to the unknown, from the visible to the invisible. And no competent chemist thinks to-day of doubting the real existence of these ions and corpuscles, because they are invisible and cannot be proved by experience, any more than he thinks of doubting the reality of his own life.

Again, there is no sane man to-day who does not accept as proved the truth of the uniformity of nature, and yet this truth is established by inference, and not by experience. Our experience would have to be as wide as cosmic history, in order to establish this doctrine of the uniformity of nature by actual demonstration. Suns rise and set, moons wax and wane, tides ebb and flow, seasons come and pass away, day and night follow each other in unbroken succession, and we conclude that this has been the unvarying order from the beginning and that it will continue to be the unvarying order to the end. And we declare confidently that this is proved — although it is not and cannot in the very nature of things be demonstrated in actual experience,— because human experience so far as it goes makes the reality of this tremendous conception necessary. This universe

simply is not understandable unless this great thought of the uniformity of nature is accepted as everlastingly and universally true. It is only an inference, unsupported by the demonstration of experience, and yet the scientific world agrees to regard this conception as established.

And so I might go on, giving further illustration of the proof of inference as contrasted with the proof of experience; but I have said enough perhaps to make clear my point, the validity of the proof of inference as the basis of established truth. In each case, we have seen that certain facts known in experience, such as the movement of light in waves, or the conductivity of a heated gas, or the constantly recurring phenomena of day and night, have involved of necessity the reality of certain other facts unknown, and, in the nature of things, unknowable in experience; and the scientists agree to accept these unknown and unknowable facts as proved by the method of logical inference. And it is these inferred truths, I may add, which constitute the very condition of all scientific progress! Were the scientist obliged to restrict all his knowledge to the one proof of experience and accept nothing as real which he had not seen or touched or heard or measured or tested, then would scientific investigation be at an end. Then would the "ether" in the atmosphere be utterly unknown, and the phenomenon of light be an inexplicable mystery. Then would ions and corpuscles have remained hidden and the miracles of modern chemistry have been impossible. Then would this universe be interpreted as a realm of confusion, of accident, of chaos; and the great truth of the uniformity of nature as an idle speculation.

The fact is, science has advanced and truth has been established not by what men have actually proved through the medium of physical experience, but by what they have proved by inference, by logic, by sublime faith. Men have launched boldly out into the unknown mysteries of time and space and matter — from the little which they have been able to experience, they have advanced to the great realities which have transcended all bodily experience. They have based their investigations upon the supposition that this universe is a great harmony in all of its parts, and have agreed that, if the great things of which we dream, fit and supplement and harmonize with the little things which we actually know in our limited range of experience, then we have a right — a logical right — to accept these great dreams as true. The ether in the atmosphere is a dream, if you will, the existence of the ions and corpuscles of the chemist is a dream, the uniformity of nature is a dream,— but these dreams fit the facts which we know in experience, and therefore are rightly regarded as realities. Listen to the words of Prof. Duncan, professor of chemistry in the University of Washington and Jefferson, in his book entitled, "The New Knowledge," as he interprets the wonders of the new chemistry of our time. He tells of the marvellous discoveries of J. J. Thomson, Becquerel, Curie, Ramsay, and Crookes — discoveries regarding the properties of atoms and molecules and the combination of atoms and molecules, which almost pass all belief — and he concludes his treatise by asking if these speculations are true. And he answers by the proof of inference. These are his words: —"If we have a beautiful building of sys-

temized perceptions and conceptions all dovetailing into one another into the complete expression of an idea, we say that the idea is true, (even though it passes all demonstration in experience); we say that it is true because we see that it is a perfect harmony, and this harmony gives us a feeling of the recognition of the truth. It is faith, if you will — but it is this faith which is bred in the very bone of science."

Such is the validity of the proof of inference,— proof which demonstrates truth not by direct experience but by logical inference from what is experienced to what is not or cannot be experienced; that proof upon which alone all the great scientific discoveries of the last one hundred years repose, and which alone makes possible a progressive knowledge. And it is this proof from inference which I would beg to offer as the proof of immortality! Of course, you see the application of this truth to the problem of the eternal life without any detailed analysis upon my part. Here, before our face and eyes, are the great facts of existence, which are so vital a part of our experience. Here is human life with its thoughts and aspirations and ideals; its struggles and battles and achievements; its disappointments and sufferings and agonies. Here is the biological story of the age-long evolution of the human race from the first faint germ of protoplasmic life on the one side to "Plato's brain and the Lord Christ's heart" upon the other,— that story so full of the struggle of the animal with the material, of the human with the animal, of the divine with the human,— that story of the slow rise from flesh into spirit, from body into soul, from the brute into the

man, from the man into the conscious son of the living God. Here also is the historical story of the age-long struggle of the race for social prosperity, happiness, and peace; the struggle of race against race, of people against people, of nation against nation, for supremacy in commerce, government and war — that story so aglow with the splendor of brave words spoken and heroic deeds performed — so sanctified by the holy names of seers and sages, of saints and prophets, of martyrs and heroes — so nobly stained by the tears of anguished love and the blood-drops of courageous sacrifice. Here is the story of human achievement in the realms of art and literature and music,— the evidence in the form of paintings and poems and symphonies of the mighty thoughts that have surged in human brains and the overwhelming emotions that have throbbed in human hearts. Here, above all else, are the stories of the individual lives of men and women and little children — the stories of joy and sorrow, of defeat and victory, of life and death; stories so simple, so humble, so trivial, so hidden away behind the walls of quiet, unknown homes, and yet the stories which constitute the sum and substance of the fibre of human living! Here, I say, are the facts of human life as we know these facts in experience; and in the light of these facts, I venture to affirm that, just as the facts of light proved the reality of the invisible "ether," so do these facts of human life prove the reality of the invisible life beyond the grave. The facts are alone understandable on the supposition of the reality of immortality. The only explanation of what lies beyond the grave that harmonizes, "fits in," with human life as we know

it here and now, to use the test of truth just defined by Prof. Duncan, is the explanation that "God created man to be immortal." Immortality, that is, like all the greatest, deepest, and highest truths of modern science, is established by the proof of inference; the truth of the immortal life is demonstrated not by direct experience, which is manifestly impossible, but by inevitable and necessary deduction from what is experienced here to what must exist over there! We know, say the scientists, that the "ether" in the atmosphere is a reality, even though it is utterly beyond the reach of our experience, and this because the facts of light cannot be explained without it. So also, to my mind, do we know that the immortal life is a reality, even though, like the "ether" this immortal life is utterly beyond the reach of our conscious experience, because the facts of human life cannot be explained without it. We know, say the chemists, that the invisible ions and corpuscles are real, because the facts of the visible elements cannot be understood without them. So also do we know that the invisible life beyond the grave is real, because the facts of this visible life cannot be understood without it. We know, say the scientists, that nature is not chaotic but uniform through all time and space, because all the known facts of human experience demand that hypothesis for their rational explanation. So also do we know that we are immortal because all the known facts of human life demand that hypothesis for their satisfactory explanation. The scientist, although he does not know in actual experience, has a perfect right to accept as proved the reality of "ether," the actuality of ions and corpuscles, and the truth of

the uniformity of nature. And in exactly the same way, the theologian, although he does not know in actual conscious experience, has a perfect right to accept as proved the reality and the actuality and the truth of the conception of immortality. All of these conceptions, scientific and theological, rest upon the same basis of inference from the known to the unknown, from the visible to the invisible, and all must stand or fall together. When Prof. Duncan establishes the reality of the new chemical wonders of our time by stating that these ideas are true because they constitute a perfect harmony in our rational thought, he has given a test of truth which applies not only in the realm of science but also in the realm of metaphysics and theology, and he has proved the essential truth not only of the material speculations of the chemists, who have dreamed of ions and corpuscles, but he has also proved the essential truth of the spiritual speculations of the poets and the seers and the prophets, who have dreamed of the life that is eternal.

This now is what I mean by the proof of immortality — a proof which is as incontrovertible as any of those proofs upon which rest the vast superstructure of modern science and which nobody thinks of questioning,— and this is what is meant by all who accept the doctrine of immortality as a demonstrated reality. It is this which explains Dr. Gordon's apparently contradictory position, when he opens his book on "Immortality and the New Theodicy" with the categorical statement that we "must surrender at the outset all hope of demonstration," and closes it with the equally categorical affirmation that the human reason registers its decree

in favor of the immortality of man! It is this which explains John Fiske's peculiar attitude. He states emphatically, as I have told you, in his "Life Everlasting," that the conception of immortality is unsupported by proof and is utterly inconceivable. And yet he states, with even greater emphasis, in his "Destiny of Man," his personal confession, "I believe in the immortality of the soul as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work." It is this conception of proof which James Martineau had in mind when he made that marvellously illuminating statement,— that we believe in immortality not because it can be demonstrated in experience, but we are always trying to demonstrate it because we must believe it! The conception of immortality is true, in the same way that all the greater conceptions of modern science are true — true because the integrity of the human reason demands its reality. And I for one can never cease to wonder that those very persons, who make the greatest pretensions to being guided by their reason and who pretend to place the most implicit reliance upon the methods of modern science, are oftentimes the very ones who fail to see that this very reason, by which they are guided, and these very scientific methods, of which they boast, lead inevitably to immortality as a demonstrated reality. I for one believe that the time has gone by for speaking of the eternal life as a hope, a faith, a probability, a dream of the poets, and a vision of the prophets! If immortality is nothing but a hope, a probability, a dream, then is the vast and splendid structure of modern science, which no sane man thinks of questioning, nothing

but a hope, a probability, a dream! The two things stand or fall together,— it is all or none!

I would remind you, as my last word, of that famous episode which took place a few years ago before the chemical section of the British Association. Prof. Ramsay, the world-famous scientist, opened his address upon this particular occasion with these words: —"The subject of my remarks to-day is a new gas. I shall describe to you later its peculiar properties, but it would be unfair not to put you at once into possession of the knowledge of its most remarkable property, which is this — it has not yet been discovered!" * In the same way, immortality has not been discovered. But we know, even as Prof. Ramsay knew of his wonderful gas, that it exists! We need have no doubt, therefore, no fear, no questioning! So sure as the human reason is not madness, so sure as our present life is not a delusion or a snare, so sure as God lives and we are his children, so sure is it, that "God created man to be immortal. He made him in the image of his own eternity. In the eyes of the foolish they seem to die, and their going from us is thought to be destruction. But they are in peace, being full of immortality."

* See "A Reasonable Easter," by U. G. B. Pierce, A. U. A. tract, 196.

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No. 252

THE EVERLASTING REALITY OF RELIGION

BY

JOHN FISKE

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

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THE EVERLASTING REALITY OF RELIGION *

THE visitor to Geneva, whose studies have made him familiar with the richest human personality of all that are associated with that historic city, will never leave the place without making a pilgrimage to Ferney. In that refined and quiet rural homestead things still remain very much as on the day when the aged Voltaire left it for that last visit to Paris, where his long life was worthily ended, amid words and deeds of affectionate homage. One may sit down at the table where was written the most perfect prose, perhaps, that ever flowed from pen, and look about the little room, with its evidences of plain living and high thinking, until one seems to recall the eccentric figure of the vanished master, with his flashes of shrewd wisdom and caustic wit, his insatiable thirst for knowledge, his consuming hatred of bigotry and oppression, his merciless contempt for shams, his boundless enthusiasm of humanity. As we stroll in the park, that quaint presence goes along with us, till all at once in a shady nook, we come upon something highly significant and characteristic — the little parish church, with its inscription over the portal, '*Deo erexit Voltaire.*' And as we muse

*This essay, somewhat amplified, forms a chapter in Mr. Fiske's "Through Nature to God," and is here printed by kind permission of its publishers, Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin Company.

upon it, the piercing eyes and sardonic but not unkindly smile seem still to follow us. What meant this eccentric inscription?

When Voltaire became the possessor of the manor of Ferney, the church was sadly out of repair, and stood where it obstructed the view from certain windows of the château. So he had it cleared away, and built in a better spot the new church which is still there. It was duly consecrated, and the Pope further hallowed it with some relics of ancient saints; and there, for many a year, the tenants and dependents of the manor assembled for divine service. Nowhere in France had Voltaire ever seen a church dedicated to God. It was always to Our Lady of This, or Saint So-and-so of That; always there was some intermediary between the devout soul and the God that it worshipped. Not thus should it be with Voltaire's church, built upon his own estate to minister to the spiritual needs of his people. It should be dedicated simply to the worship and service of God. Furthermore, it was built and dedicated, not by any ecclesiastical or corporate body, but by the lord of the manor, the individual layman, Voltaire.

This, I say, was highly characteristic; it gave terse and pointed expression to Voltaire's way of looking at such things. Church and theology were ignored, and the individual soul was left alone with its God. The Protestant reformers and other free-thinkers had stopped far short of this. In place of an infallible Church, they had left an infallible Book; if they rejected transubstantiation, they retained as obligatory such doctrines as those of the incarnation and atonement; if they laughed at the miracles of medieval saints, they would allow no discredit to be thrown

upon those of the apostolic age. In short, they left standing a large part, if not the larger part, of the supernatural edifice within which the religious mind of Europe had so long been sheltered. But Voltaire regarded that whole supernatural edifice as so much rubbish, impeding the full development of the human mind and which ought as quickly as possible to be torn to pieces and cleared away. His emotions, as well as his reason, were concerned in this conclusion. Organized Christianity as it then existed in France, was responsible for much atrocious injustice; and in neighboring lands the Inquisition still existed. Ecclesiastical bigotry, the prejudices of ignorance, whatever tended to hold people in darkness and restrain them from the full and natural use of their faculties, Voltaire hated with all the intensity of which he was capable. He summed it all up in one abstract term, and personified it as 'the Infamous'; and the watchword of that life of tireless vigilance was, 'Crush the Infamous.' Supernatural theology had been too often pressed into the service of 'the infamous,' and for supernatural theology the lord of Ferney could find no place in his scheme of things. He lost no chance of assailing it with mockery and sarcasm made terrible by earnestness of purpose, till he came to be regarded as the most inveterate antagonist of the Church.

Yet, among the great men of letters in France contemporary with Voltaire, the most part went further than he, and denied the reality of religion. Few of them, indeed, believed in the existence of God, or would have had anything to do with building a house of worship. It is related of David Hume that, when dining once in a party of eighteen at the house

of Baron d'Holbach, he expressed a doubt as to whether any person would anywhere be found willing to avow himself dogmatically an atheist. 'Indeed, my dear sir,' said the host, 'you are at this moment sitting at table with seventeen such persons!' In that group of philosophers were men of great intelligence and lofty purpose, such as d'Alembert, Diderot, Helvetius, Condorcet, Buffon — men with more real Christianity in their natures than you could find in half the churches of Christendom. The roots of their atheism were emotional rather than philosophical. It was part of the generous but rash and superficial impulse through which they had disowned all connection with a church that had become subservient to so much that was bad. Their atheism was one of the fruits of the policy which had suppressed Huguenotism in France. It was an early instance of what has since been often observed, that materialism and atheism are more apt to flourish in Romanist than in Protestant countries. A form of religion which is already to some extent purified and rationalized awakens no such violent revulsion in free-thinking minds as have those more heavily encumbered with remnants of primitive thought. Moreover, the rationalized religion of Protestant countries is very commonly found in alliance with political freedom. In France, under the Old Régime, the Catholic religion was stigmatized as an ally of despotism, as well as a congeries of absurd doctrines and ceremonies. The best minds felt their moral sense shocked by it no less than their reason. No very deep thinking was done on the subject. The phase which religious sentiment had assumed in the Middle Ages had become unintelligible. The most highly

endowed minds were dead to the sublimity of Gothic architecture, and could see nothing but grotesque folly in Dante's poetry. They seriously believed that religious doctrines and ecclesiastical government were originally elaborate systems of fraud, devised by crafty tyrants for the sole purpose of enslaving the multitude of mankind. No discrimination was shown: they were as ready to throw away belief in God as in the miracles of Saint Columbanus, and to scout the notion of a future life in the same terms in which they denounced the forged donation of Constantine. The flippant ease with which they disposed of the gravest questions, in ignorance of the very nature of the problem to be solved, was well illustrated in that remark of the astronomer, Lalande, that he had swept the heavens with his telescope and found no God there. A similar instance of missing the point was furnished about fifty years ago by the eminent physiologist, Moleschott, when he exclaimed, 'No thought without phosphorus!' and congratulated himself that he had for ever disposed of the human soul. Perhaps those are the two silliest remarks that ever appeared in print. A very different spirit was shown in the reply of Laplace, when reminded by Napoleon that his great treatise on the dynamics of the solar system contained no allusion to God — 'I had no need of that hypothesis.' This remark was profound; for it meant that, in order to give a specific explanation of any single group of phenomena, it would not do to appeal to divine action, which is equally the source of all phenomena. Science can deal with secondary causes only.

In the eighteenth century men of science were learning that such is the case, and they believed that

the logical result was atheism. This was because the only idea of God which they had ever been taught to entertain was the Latin idea of a God remote from the world, and manifested only through occasional interference with the order of nature. When they dismissed this idea, they deemed themselves atheists. If they had been familiar with the Greek idea of God as immanent in the world, and manifested at every moment through the orderly sequence of its phenomena, their conclusion would probably have been different.

To these philosophers Voltaire's unshaken theism seemed a mere bit of eccentric conservatism. But Voltaire saw a rational principle at work which atheism could in no wise account for. To him the universe seemed full of evidences of beneficent purpose; and more than once he set forth, with eloquence and power, the 'argument from design' which received its fullest development at the hands of Paley, and the authors of the 'Bridgewater Treatises.' There is, thus, yet another significance added to the little church at Ferney; not only was it the sole church in France dedicated to God, not only was its builder a layman, hostile to ecclesiastical doctrines and methods, but he was almost alone among the eminent free-thinkers of his age and country in believing in God and asserting the everlasting reality of religion.

In the English-speaking world there has never been any such divorce between rationalism and religion as in France; and among the glories of English literature are such deeply reverent and profoundly philosophical writings as those of Hooker and Chillingworth, Butler and Paley, and in our own time, of Dr. Martineau. Nowhere in history, per-

haps, have faith and reason been more harmoniously wedded together than in the history of English Protestantism. But the disturbance that affected France in the age of Voltaire now affects the whole Christian world, and every question connected with religion has been probed to depths of which the existence was scarcely suspected a century ago. One seldom, indeed, hears the mockery in which the old French writers dealt so freely. That was an ebullition of temper called forth by a tyranny that had come to be a social nuisance. The scepticism of our day is rather sad than frivolous; it drags people from long-cherished notions in spite of themselves; it spares but few that are active-minded; it invades the church, and does not stop in the pews to listen, but ascends the pulpit and preaches. There is no refuge anywhere from this doubting, testing spirit of the age.

In the attitude of civilized men toward the world in which we live, the change of front has been stupendous. The old cosmology has been overthrown in huddling ruin. Attacks upon old doctrines multiply; and rituals, creeds, and Scriptures are overhauled and criticized until a young generation grows up, knowing nothing of the sturdy faith of its grandfathers save by hearsay, for it sees everything in heaven and earth called upon to show its credentials.

The general effect of this intellectual movement has been to discredit more than ever the Latin idea of God as a Power outside of the course of nature, occasionally interfering with it. In all directions the process of evolution has been discovered, working after similar methods; and this forces upon us the belief in the unity of nature. We are thus driven to the Greek conception of God as the Power working

in and through nature, without interference or infraction of law. The element of chance, which some atheists formerly admitted into their scheme of things, nobody would now waste his time in theorizing about — a fortuitous concourse of atoms. We have so far spelled out the history of creation as to see that all has been done in strict accordance with law. The method has been the method of evolution; and, the more we study it, the more do we find that one part of the story never gives the lie to another part.

So beautiful is all this orderly progression, so satisfying to some of our intellectual needs, that many minds are inclined to doubt if anything more can be said of the universe than that it is a reign of law, an endless aggregate of coexistences and sequences. When I say that one star attracts another star, we do not really know that there is any pulling in the case. All we know is that a piece of cosmical matter, in the presence of another piece of matter, alters its space-relations in a certain specified way. Among the coexistences and sequences there is an order which we can detect, and a few thinkers are inclined to maintain that this is the whole story. Such a state of mind, which rests satisfied with a mere body of observed facts, without seeking to trace their ultimate implications, is a characteristic of what Auguste Comte called Positivism. It is a more refined phase of atheism than that of the guests at Baron d'Holbach's; but its adherents are not many, for the impetus of modern scientific thought tends, with overpowering force, to the conception of a single first cause, or prime mover, perpetually manifested from moment to moment in all the universe. As I have

elsewhere argued, this is practically identical with the Athanasian conception of the immanent Deity. Modern men of science have called this view of things Monism; but when questioned concerning the immanent First Cause, they reply with a general disclaimer of knowledge, and thus entitle themselves to be called by Prof. Huxley's term, Agnostics.

Just here comes along the materialist, and asks some questions, and tries to serve on us a kind of writ of *quo warranto*. If modern physics leads inevitably to the conception of a single Infinite Power manifested in all phenomena of the knowable universe, by what authority do we identify that Power with the indwelling Deity as conceived by Saint Athanasius? The Athanasian Deity is, to some extent, fashioned in man's image: he is, to say the least, like the psychical part of ourselves. After making all possible allowance for the gulf which separates that which is infinite and absolute from that which is finite and relative, an essential kinship is asserted between God and the human soul. 'By what authority,' our materialist will ask, 'do we assert any such kinship between the human soul and the power which modern physics reveals as active throughout the universe? Is not it going far beyond our knowledge to assert any such kinship? Would it not be more modest and becoming in us simply to designate this ever-active, universal power by some purely scientific term?' This argument is to-day a very familiar one, and it wears a plausible aspect. It is couched in a spirit of scientific reserve, which wins for it respectful consideration. The modest and cautious spirit of science has done so much for us that it is always wise to give due heed to its

warnings. 'Let us beware of going beyond our knowledge,' says the materialist. 'We know nothing but phenomena as manifestations of an indwelling force, nor have we any ground for supposing there is anything psychical in the universe outside of the individual minds of men and other animals. Moreover,' he continues, 'the psychical phenomena of which we are conscious — memory, emotion, volition — are but peculiarly continued manifestations of the same indwelling force which, under other conditions, appears as light or heat or electricity. All such manifestations are fleeting; and beyond this world of fleeting phenomena we have no warrant, whether in consciousness or common sense, for supposing that anything psychical exists. This world, cognizable through sense, is all there is; and the story of it that we can decipher by the aid of terrestrial experience is the whole story. The unseen world is a mere figment of the fancy of primeval man.' Such is the general view of things that the materialist urges upon us, with the plea of scientific sobriety and caution; and to many minds it wears a plausible aspect.

Nevertheless, when subjected to criticism, it soon loses this appearance, and is seen to be rash and hasty. In the first place, I have argued that there is no such correlation as is alleged between physical forces and the phenomena of consciousness. I have put that argument into print so many times that I will not stop to repeat it here, but simply mention the point, and go on to the second place. When we come to the denial of all kinship between the human soul and the infinite Power which is revealed in all phenomena, we shall find the materialistic theory raises difficulties quite as great as those which it

seeks to avoid. The difficulties which it wishes to avoid are those which evidently encumber the attempt to conceive of Diety as personality exerting volition and cherishing intelligent purposes. Such difficulties are undeniably great; nay, we may as well confess at once that they are insuperable. Words which have gained their meaning from finite experience must inevitably falter and fail when we seek to apply them to that which is infinite. But we do not mend matters by employing terms taken from the inorganic world rather than from human personality. To designate the universal Power by some scientific term, such as Force, does not help us in the least. All our experience of force is an experience of finite forces antagonized by other forces: we can frame no conception whatever of infinite force, comprising within itself all the myriad antagonizing attractions and impulses of which the universe consists. We go beyond our knowledge when we speak of infinite force quite as much as when we speak of infinite personality. Indeed, no word or phase which we seek to apply to Diety can be other than an extremely unsatisfactory symbol. From the very nature of the case, it must always be so: and, if we once understand the reason why, it need not vex nor puzzle us. It is not only when we try to speculate about Deity that we find ourselves encompassed with difficulties, and are made to realize how very short is our mental tether. This world, in its commonest aspects presents many baffling problems of which it is sometimes wholesome that we should be reminded.[1]

Difficulties are not confined to theological sub-

[1] Here followed some examples of the difficulties of conception involved in sundry physical problems connected with the compressibility of matter, and with the luminiferous ether.

jects: they confront us upon the occasion of every fresh extension of our knowledge of the physical world. What must we expect when we come to speculate upon the nature and the modes of existence of God? Bearing this in mind, let us proceed to consider the assumption that the infinite Power manifested in the universe is psychical in its nature — in other words, that between God and the human soul there is kinship, though we may be unable to render any theoretical account of it.

Let us consider this assumption historically and in the light of our general knowledge of evolution. Let us look at it after the manner of naturalists. It is with purpose that I use the word 'assumption.' As a matter of history, the existence of a quasi-human God has always been an assumption, a postulate, something which men have all along taken for granted. It probably never occurred to anyone to try to prove the existence of such a God until it was doubted, and doubts on that subject are very modern. Omitting from the count a few score ingenious philosophers, it may be said that all mankind — the wisest and the simplest — have taken for granted the existence of a Deity, or deities, of a psychical nature more or less similar to that of humanity. Such a postulate has formed a part of our human thinking from the primeval ages down to the present time. The forms in which it has appeared have been myriad in number, but all have been included in this same fundamental assumption.

Take away from our symbolic conception of God the human element, and that aspect of theism which has from the outset chiefly interested mankind has gone. That supremely interesting aspect of theism

is part and parcel of the general belief in an unseen world in which human beings have an interest. The belief in the personal continuance of the human soul after death is a very ancient one. The savage custom of burying utensils and trinkets for the use of the deceased enables us to trace it back into the glacial period. We may safely say that for more than a hundred thousand years mankind have regarded themselves as personally interested in two worlds — the physical world and another world, comparatively dim and vaguely outlined, with which the psychical side of humanity is more closely connected. This belief in the unseen world seems to be coextensive with theism. The animism of the lowest savage includes both. No race of men has ever been found destitute of the belief in a ghost world. Now, a ghost world implies a personal continuance of human beings after death. These ideas are extremely crude in their symbolism, and the refinement in the conception of Deity is paralleled by the refinement in the conception of the other world. From Valhalla to Dante's *Paradiso* what a distance the human mind had travelled!

In our modern monotheism the assumption of kinship between God and the human soul is the assumption that there is in man a psychical element, identical in nature with that which is eternal. Belief in a quasi-human God and belief in the soul's immortality — these appear in their origin and development to be inseparably connected. They are part and parcel of one and the same efflorescence of the human mind.

Our account of the rise and progress of the general belief in an unseen world is, however, not yet com-

plete. No mention has been made of an element which apparently has always been present in the belief. I mean the ethical element. The savage's primeval ghost world is always mixed up with his notions of what he ought to do and ought not to do. The native of Tierra del Fuego, who foreboded a snow-storm because one of Charles Darwin's party killed some birds for specimens, gives an excellent illustration. In a tribe living on the verge of starvation, any wanton sacrifice of meat must awaken the wrath of the deities who control the weather. Thus whatever conduct the necessity of clan or tribe have prohibited soon comes to wear the aspect of sacrilege.

Thus inextricably intertwined, from the moment of their first dim dawning upon the consciousness of humanity, have been the notion of Deity, the notion of an unseen world, and the notions of right and wrong. In their beginnings theology and ethics are inseparable: in all historical development of religion they have remained inseparable. The conceptions of primeval man have given place to conceptions framed after wider and deeper experience; but the union of ethics with theology remains undisturbed, even in that most refined religious philosophy which ventures no opinion concerning the happiness or misery of a future human life, except that the seed sown here will naturally determine the fruit to be gathered.

We are now prepared to see what is involved in the reality of religion. Speaking historically, it may be said that religion has always had two sides. On the one side, it has consisted of a theory, more or less elaborate; and, on the other side, it has consisted of a group of sentiments conformable to the theory. Now, in all ages and in every form of religion the

theory has comprised three essential elements. First, the belief in Deity as quasi-human. Second, belief in an unseen world in which human beings continue to exist after death. Third, recognition of the ethical aspects of human life as related in a special and intimate sense to this unseen world. These three elements, I should say, are alike indispensable. If any one of the three be taken away, the remnant cannot properly be called a religion. Is, then, the subject-matter of religion something real and substantial, or is it a mere figment of the imagination? Has religion, through all these centuries, been dealing with an eternal verity, or has it been blindly groping after a phantom? Can that history of the universe which we call the doctrine of evolution be made to furnish any lesson that will prove helpful in answering this question?

We shall find, I think, that it does furnish such a lesson. First, let us remember that, along with the three indispensable elements here specified, every historical religion has always contained a quantity of cosmological speculation, metaphysical doctrine, priestly rites and ceremonies and injunctions; and a very considerable part of this construction has been abolished by criticism. The destruction of beliefs has been so great that we can hardly think it strange if some critics have taken it into their heads that nothing can be rescued. But let us see what the doctrine of evolution has to say. Our inquiry will for a few moments seem to take us far afield, but that we need not mind if we find the answer directing us homeward.

One of the richest contributions made to scientific knowledge in our day is Herbert Spencer's luminous

exposition of life as 'the continuous adjustment of inner relations to outer relations.' The extreme simplicity of the subject in its earliest illustrations is such that the student hardly suspects the wealth of knowledge of various sorts to which it is opening the way. The most fundamental characteristic of living things is their response to external stimuli. If you come upon a dog lying by the roadside, and are in doubt whether he is alive, you poke him with a stick. If you get no response, you presently think that it is a dead dog. So, if a tree fails to put forth leaves, it is an indication of death. Pour water on a drooping plant, and it shows its life by rearing its head: this is a result of a continuous adjustment of relations within the plant to relations existing outside of it. All life upon the globe, whether psychical or physical, represents continued adjustment of inner to outer relations: the degree of life is low or high, according as the correspondence between internal and external relations is simple or complex, perfect or imperfect. The whole progression of life upon the globe, in so far as it has been achieved through natural selection has consisted in the preservation and propagation of those living creatures in whom the adjustment of inner relations to outer relations is most successful. This is only a more descriptive way of saying that natural selection is equivalent to survival of the fittest.

The shapes of animals, as well as their capacities, have been evolved through almost infinitely slow increments of adjustment upon adjustment. In this way, for instance, has been evolved the vertebrate skeleton, through a process of which Spencer's analysis is as thrilling as a poem. Or consider the de-

velopment of the special organs of sense: among the most startling disclosures of modern embryology are those which belong to this subject. The most perfect organs of touch are the *vibrissæ*, or whiskers, of the cat. These are merely specialized forms of such hairs as those which cover the bodies of most mammals, and which remain, in evanescent shape, upon the human skin, embedded in minute sacs. Now, in their origin, the eye and ear are, like these, sundry specialized, differentiated hairs. The implication of these facts is that sight and hearing were slowly differentiated from the sense of touch. We seem to discern from it how, in the history of the eye, there was at first a sensitive pigment, making one spot particularly sensitive to light. Then came, by slow degrees, the increased translucence, the convexity of surface, and the multiplication of vesicles arranging themselves as retinal rods. And what was the result of all this for the creature in whom organs of vision were thus developed? There was an immense extension of the range, complexity, and definiteness of the adjustment of inner relations to outer relations. In other words there was an immense increase of life. There came into existence new marvels for those with eyes to see — a mighty visible world that for sightless creatures had been virtually non-existent. With the further progress of organic life the high development of the senses was attended or followed by the increase of brain development and the correlative intelligence, immeasurably enlarging the scope of the correspondence between the living creature and the outer world.

In the case of man the adjustments by which we meet the exigencies of life from day to day are largely

psychical. Our actions are guided by our theory of the situation; and it needs no illustration to show us that a true theory is an adjustment of one's ideas to the external facts, and that such adjustments are helps to successful living. The whole work of education is directed toward cultivating the capacity of framing associations of ideas that conform to objective facts. It is thus that life is guided.

So, as we look back over the marvellous life-history of our planet, even from the time when there was no life more exalted than that of conferva scum on the surface of a pool, through ages innumerable until the present time, when man is beginning to learn how to decipher nature's secrets — we look back over an infinitely slow series of minute adjustments, gradually and laboriously increasing the points of contact between the inner life and the world environing it. Step by step in the upward advance toward humanity the environment has enlarged, from the world of the freshwater alga, with its tiny field and its brief term of existence, to the world of civilized men, which comprehends the stellar universe during æons of time. Every such enlargement has had reference to actual existences outside. The eye was developed in response to the outside existence of radiant light, the ear in response to the outward existence of acoustic vibrations. The mother's love came in response to the infant's needs. Fidelity and honor were gradually developed as the nascent social life required them. Everywhere the internal adjustment has been brought about so as to harmonize with some way, ally existing external fact. Such has been na- skeletonethod; such is the deepest law of all life that sis is as as been able to detect.

Now there was a critical moment in the history of our planet, when love was beginning to play a part hitherto unknown, when the notions of right and wrong were germinating in the nascent human soul, when the family was coming into existence, when social ties were beginning to be knit, when winged words first took their flight through the air. This is the moment when the process of evolution was being shifted to a higher plane, when civilization was to be superadded to organic evolution, when the last and highest of creatures was coming upon the scene, when the dramatic purpose of creation was approaching fulfilment. At that critical moment we see the nascent human soul vaguely reaching forth toward something akin to itself, not in the realm of fleeting phenomena, but in the eternal presence beyond. An internal adjustment of ideas was achieved in correspondence with an unseen world. That the ideas were very crude and childlike, that they were put together with all manner of grotesqueness, is what might be expected. The cardinal fact is that the crude, childlike mind was groping to put itself into relation with an ethical world not visible to the senses. And one aspect of this fact, not to be lightly passed over, is the fact that religion, thus set upon the scene coeval with the birth of humanity has played such a dominant part in the subsequent evolution of human society that what history would be without it is quite beyond our imagination. As to the dimensions of this cardinal fact, there can thus be no question. None can deny that it is the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the existence of mankind upon the earth.

Now, if the relation thus established, in the morn-

ing twilight of man's career, between the human soul and the world invisible and immaterial is a relation of which only the subjective term is real and the objective term is non-existent, then I say it is something utterly without precedent in the whole history of creation. All the analogies of evolution, so far as men have been able to decipher it, are overwhelming against any such supposition. All the analogies of nature fairly shout against the assumption of such a breach of continuity between the evolution of man and all previous evolution. So far as our knowledge of nature goes, the whole momentum of it carries us forward to the conclusion that the unseen world, as the objective term in a relation that has coexisted with the whole career of mankind, has a real existence; and it is but following out the analogy to regard that unseen world as the theatre where the ethical process is destined to reach its full consummation.

The lesson of evolution is that through all these weary ages the human soul has not been cherishing in religion a delusive phantom; but in spite of seemingly endless groping and stumbling, it has been rising to the recognition of its essential kinship with the ever-living God. Of all the implications of the doctrine of evolution with regard to man, I believe the very deepest and strongest to be that which asserts the everlasting reality of religion.

So far as I am aware, the foregoing argument is here advanced for the first time. It does not pretend to meet the requirements of scientific demonstration; one must not look for scientific demonstration in problems that contain so many factors transcending our direct experience. But as an appeal to our com-

mon sense, the argument here brought forward surely has great weight. It seems to me far more convincing than any chain of subtle metaphysical reasoning can ever be; for such chains, however invincible in appearance, are no stronger than the weakest of their links, and in metaphysics one is always suspecting some undetected flaw. My argument represents the impression irresistibly forced upon one by a pretty broad general familiarity with nature's processes and methods. It therefore belongs to the class of arguments that survive.

Observe, it is far from being a trite repetition of the old argument that beliefs universally accepted must be true. Upon the view here represented, every specific opinion ever entertained by men regarding religious things may be wrong, and in all probability is exceedingly crude; yet the everlasting reality of religion, in its three indispensable elements, as here set forth, remains unassailable.

Our common-sense argument puts the scientific presumption entirely and decisively on the side of religion, and against all atheistic and materialistic explanations of the universe. It establishes harmony between our highest knowledge and our highest aspirations by showing that the latter, no less than the former, are a normal result of the universal cosmic process. It has nothing to fear from the advance of scientific discovery; for as these things come to be better understood, it is going to be realized, I think, that the days of the antagonism between science and religion must by and by come to an end. That antagonism has been chiefly due to the fact that religious ideas were until lately allied with the doctrine of special creation. They have therefore needed to

be remodelled and reconsidered from new points of view. But we have at length reached a point where it is becoming daily more and more apparent that, with deeper study of nature, the old strife between faith and knowledge is drawing to a close; and thus, disentangled at last from that ancient slough of despond, the human mind will breathe a freer air and enjoy a vastly extended horizon.

No. 253

THE RIGHT USES OF FEAR

BY

REV. BENJAMIN A. GOODRIDGE

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

American Unitarian Association

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THE RIGHT USES OF FEAR

Fear is a word out of favor,— almost in disgrace,— in these days. We are exhorted zealously to be without fear, because there is nothing in the universe of which we need to be afraid. Fear is said to be the beginning of folly, of failure, of disease, and destruction. It cannot possibly be the beginning of wisdom, or of any good thing.

If we maintain that fear is a necessary element in our philosophy of life, we are beset on every hand by a bewildering variety of cults which discredit such philosophy as antiquated and unwholesome,— a relic of that dreadful period before we had found out that all evils are imaginary, and that there is nothing but good in the universe.

If, for the sake of peace and quiet, we give up philosophical argument and betake ourselves to religion, we find that there is no room for us any longer in that country. The hosts of those who are without fear are already encamped there. They are not pilgrims travelling through a region in which there is indeed abundance of beauty and joy, but also much of awe and wonder, and even of terror,— a land of heavenly heights and devilish abysses. No, this is a picnic country. The flaming and smoking and thundering peak of Sinai has been pared down

until it is only a gentle little hill, with smooth green turf clear to the top. From the summit of this reconstructed Sinai the Almighty will never hand down stern commandments to his people, and bid them "hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously."

Of what use is it, then, to quote to the picnickers sayings from the great book of our religion which seem to show that psalmists, prophets, proverb-makers, Jesus, and the New Testament writers made a large place for fear in their religious faith?

When the psalmist says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and again, "In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple,"— when he exhorts others to worship in fear, summons children into his presence that he may teach them this fear, and declares that such fear not only makes the beginning of a wise life, but that it endures and makes clean forever,— these sayings we are told mean only piety toward God, proper respect for him. We are bound to have reverence and regard for the Infinite Principle of Good which so fills the universe that no evil and fearful thing can exist in it. But fear him? No. Is he not perfect love? And how should we fear perfect love?

Again for the sake of peace and quiet, we forego making use of these quotations from the Testaments which seem to indicate the good uses of fear. Humbly we accept the explanation that the writers did not generally mean fear at all, when they said fear; or, if they really meant fear, it was because they were under the dominion of the same deluded mind which rules us.

To the fearless ones we say, "Good friends, at

your bidding we will cast fear out of our philosophy and our religion. Hereafter we will use exclusively your bright lexicon of thought which has no such bad word in it. And now, having yielded so much, will you not grant us a little corner where we may keep the fears that pertain to daily life? We have become so accustomed to them that we hate to give them up. It is not much that we ask, for these fears have so little to do with religion or philosophy. They have become almost instinctive. If, in our high philosophical moments, we will agree with you that there is nothing in all the universe to be afraid of, will you not allow us to be sufficiently afraid at other times for carrying on the ordinary business of our lives decently and in order?"

"For instance, we should like to continue to be afraid of disease, so that we may employ doctors and medicine to cure it, so that we may employ safeguards to prevent the spread of contagion, so that we may investigate and experiment in order to find out more clearly the nature of diseases, and better methods of prevention and cure. In business life we would like to go on having such fear of the results of laziness and imprudence and dishonesty that we shall depend for success upon industry and uprightness and wisdom rather than the magic of some mental formula. In carrying on our home life, although there we would rule by love, yet would we retain for our children some 'do-nots' and 'must-nots,' with wholesome fear of penalties. In carrying on the life of the city we would still keep the restraints of fear which prevent the lawless and cruel from doing whatsoever they will. Grant us these fears which seem so wholesome and necessary, and

I for one cannot harshly criticise or condemn these good men who, while they claim to be atheists, to possess no religion, yet from pure and exalted motives are devoting all their energies toward the betterment of human conditions. Much of the blame for their loss of faith rests upon the churches themselves. Because the Christian churches have proved in so many respects disloyal to their own teaching, and instead of being what their Lord and Master called them to be, the socially regenerative forces within the community, the light givers and life givers of the world, have become the apologists of existing inhuman and unjust conditions, many a sincere, devout man has turned in wrath and indignation against the churches. Mistakenly but sincerely confusing religion itself with the institutions of religion, he has foolishly rejected the essential faith of the church, together with the church itself.

It is a natural but nevertheless sad blunder that many of our ardent social reformers have made. Certainly they are not atheists in the strict sense of that term; they are not without religion, because they believe with all their souls in a divine social order and are working to secure it. But there can be no divine social order without a righteous God by whom this social order consists. If men are but highly developed animals, without a spiritual nature which allies them to God and to one another, with what reason can you urge upon them such spiritual motives as justice and human brotherhood? What is justice, what is human brotherhood, in the presence of animal appetites and passions, which importunely clamor for immediate gratification? Must not our friends come to see that without the inspiration and sanction of

religion there can be no permanent human society; that there can be no brotherhood of man which does not rest on the Fatherhood of God?

Social reformers to-day who renounce religion and the sanctions of religion have themselves been born and have grown up under the influences of religious teaching. All their lives they have breathed an atmosphere vitalized by the feeling and thought of religion. They do not know what it means to be without God. Though they fail to recognize it theirs is essentially the religious motive.

Let them pause and seriously contemplate what it would mean to train their children to repudiate religion; what it would mean for two and three generations of men to be thus trained in a non-religious atmosphere, to be taught from infancy that they are mere animal automata acted upon by blind external forces, the chance products of a soulless, Godless universe, with no motive power to govern them in their relations to one another but mere expediency.

The hypothesis has only to be frankly stated to be immediately and finally rejected as a horrible dream. No, no! There has been and there can be no permanent social reform without the inspiration and sanction of religion. Certainly organized religion in every age has failed to do its whole duty, has made egregious blunders even when it has sought to perform its proper mission, but this is simply to recognize the fact that organized religion has always been officered and directed by imperfect and therefore not infallible men. We claim no infallibility for it. We claim for it no supernatural guidance and protection not vouchsafed to the individual men and women who constitute its membership. We claim for it no

exemption from human weakness and error. And yet we do claim that organized religion, the Christian Church, has ever been, directly and indirectly, the saving, spiritualizing, ennobling force in human society, and that whatever of human brotherhood and social justice has thus far been attained, has been attained mainly through the instrumentality of men and women trained by its teaching and discipline, and inspired by the ideals of its recognized Founder, aye, even though some of them have rebelled against its arbitrary authority, aye, even though some of them have been tortured and burned by its intolerant champions. Through the darkest ages organized religion has preserved and transmitted a literature of enlightenment and power which has proved a gospel to all mankind.

Let not social reformers therefore repudiate the Church in the broad sense of organized religion. They need the assistance of the Church for themselves and for their children; we all need it. Amid all the varied forms of organized religion they can certainly find some one organization which seems to them to possess the freest spirit, which does not require of them assent to a creed in which they can no longer believe, which with all its limitations is most closely in accord with the teaching of the good Master, and let them heartily co-operate with it. They need the Church and they cannot succeed without it.

My friends, the trouble with us is that we have hitherto failed to perceive the absolute necessity for two great parallel processes to take place side by side in perfect harmony, the one with the other, the transformation of human character and the transformation of the conditions under which men live.

It is the duty of the church as organized religion to transform human character, to spiritualize men, to awaken within them loyalty to a great ideal, to help them to see God and to worship Him as the All Father, and in this faith to level the barriers between man and man, between classes and races. It is the duty of the Church to create within all men the social conscience and the passion for justice and human brotherhood, so that those aroused and kindly human brothers shall go out into society to transform political and economic conditions.

The Church as such can issue no programme of particular political and social reforms; that is the task of social and political organizations voluntarily organized for these very ends. The church can recognize no classes, nor engage in any mere class struggle. What the Church can do, and seriously fails in its mission if it does not do, is everywhere and at all times to point out what the highest ideals of justice and human brotherhood actually require, and wherein our present society fails to realize these ideals.

For instance, as I see it (to give a few concrete examples), it is the duty of the Church to teach the people the unspeakable iniquities of child labor in factory and sweat shop, which ought to be wiped out and could be wiped out to-morrow if the conscience of the community were properly aroused. It is the duty of the church to teach the people the injustice and inhumanity of permitting selfish and greedy men to appropriate land in our great cities upon which to build wretched tenements and crowd them with human victims, tenements which become the breeding places of disease and crime. It is the duty of the

church to teach the people the injustice and inhumanity of permitting other selfish men to monopolize the manufacture and production of any article of universal consumption and grow rich themselves out of the laborious earnings of the poor. It is the duty of the church to point out the harsh and brutal conditions of life right in our midst which degrade thousands of young women and reduce them to the pariah class of common prostitutes whom the respectable classes of society, instead of seeking to uplift and redeem, unite in virtuously condemning and in banishing beyond the reach of human sympathy, human mercy.

It is the duty of the church to declare in no ambiguous and uncertain manner that the all too common conception of private property is fundamentally unsocial, unchristian and irreligious, that "what is mine," no matter how justly I have earned it, is not my own to do with as I please, but is to be held as a trust committed to me by society, and is to be used for my own ends only in so far as they are at the same time social ends, only in so far as I minister to the well-being of my fellowmen.

These, as I see it, are only a few concrete instances, out of many which could be mentioned, wherein our present society fails to realize the ideals of justice and human brotherhood which it is the duty of organized religion to hold up before men. But the great purpose of religion is vastly more important than to thus point out existing evils; it is to so transform human character, to so socialize men's consciences, to so quicken, inspire and strengthen the good that is within them that they shall become leaders in the army of social reform; that they shall go

out into the world not only to preach the kingdom of God, but to labor always and everywhere for the coming of the kingdom of God; to create a new and more equitable social environment which will make it possible for the frailest and most immature of our fellow human creatures to live lives of justice and good-will. The two parallel processes must take place side by side, the transformation of human character and the transformation of the conditions under which men live. The breach between the Church and social reformers must not be permitted to widen; it must be bridged by mutual sympathy and co-operation. The Church as organized religion, if she is to be faithful to her exalted mission, must continually reinforce the ranks of social reformers; religion must supply the motive power for social reform.

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[No. 255]

OUR COMMON INHERITANCES

BY

EDWARD CALDWELL MOORE

THE INFLUENCE OF CONGREGATIONALISM UPON THE NATION'S RELIGION

BY

CHARLES EDWARD PARK

Addresses before the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers

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BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

OUR COMMON INHERITANCES

BY

EDWARD CALDWELL MOORE

OUR COMMON INHERITANCES

We compare the positions of the two wings of the Congregational Church in America, at the present, with those which they occupied three generations ago. We say that many things have happened in the world of thought within that period which have brought the two parties closer together. The thoughtful on both sides of that historic schism have entered into the intellectual inheritance of the nineteenth century. That intellectual inheritance has made natural and necessary a restatement of spiritual faith upon the part of the liberals as truly as of the conservatives. Men in both camps cordially accept views of God and of the world, of nature, of man, of Scripture, which separate them from their own religious ancestors by a wider interval than that which now divides the traditionally opposed ecclesiastical bodies the one from the other. In fact, if we consider the effect of the philosophical movement since Kant, of the advance of the sciences of nature with the consequences of that advance for the ideas of the world, and of man, of creation, of providence and prayer, if we reckon with the effect of the critical movement upon the idea of revelation, it is from our own ancestors in the faith that we are separated, rather than from one another. These things which I have named are common property for the men of both parties, as indeed for the

cultivated of all churches. Their direct effect is to bring the intelligent and mobile element in all the denominations closer together and to make these feel that they have a common ground. They have the tendency to make all of the historic differences of Protestants among themselves seem more and more insignificant. We are conscious that we no longer stand upon the ground which made those divisions possible. This is that to which I allude in my title as one of our common inheritances. It is our inheritance in the progress of the nineteenth century.

But, returning to the historic division between liberal and orthodox Congregational churches, I am impressed with the fact that we had another common inheritance. It is more ancient than that of which I have just spoken. But it was in its own time not less potent. It had the same kind of inevitable working upon the religious views of men. It also was common property with men of both sides of the contention. It consisted of certain philosophical and scientific postulates which had obtained in power unbroken since the beginning of Christian speculation. Indeed the ground of these postulates is much older than the Christian movement. That ground was in the Platonic view of the universe. That view was on all hands undisputed. Its reign was not really broken among us until after the time of the great schism in our Congregational churches. When at last it yielded, it was broken not by the power of that schism, but by a great world movement of thought compared with which that schism was but a small matter.

No one can fail to be impressed with the large common element in the view of God and man, of the world, of Scripture, of redemption, held by Servetus and by Calvin, by the Sozzini and by Melancthon, by Priestly or Belsham and by the defenders of orthodoxy at the end of the 18th century, by Channing or Parker and the very champions of evangelical reaction in New England in the 19th century. This is what I mean by our other common inheritance. The interesting thing here to be said seems to me this: It was exactly the effect of the common inheritance which, when the spirit of a new time began to be felt, impelled men almost resistlessly to the separation. If I may put it paradoxically, it was the very fact that they argued from identical premises which made it necessary that they should come to opposite conclusions. Both felt that God and man were mutually exclusive conceptions. The one party, emphasizing the human element in Jesus, felt themselves bound to deny that he was divine. The other, emphasizing the divine in him, did not indeed formally deny the humanity, but notoriously and palpably made of his humanity only an appearance and not a reality. We may say therefore that, in some sense, it was the old common inheritance which made the breach inevitable. In an equally true sense, it is the new common inheritance which makes inevitable the healing of the breach.

There would seem to be three great objects which engage the thoughts of men. These are nature and man and God. There is first the universe outside ourselves of which we become aware through experi-

ence. Then secondly there is man, the man myself, the man given in self-consciousness. And finally, there is that which we think of as lying behind man and nature, the explanation, source, or cause of those other two. Plato's chief interest was in man. God was somehow the postulate of the spiritual nature in man. Aristotle had begun a real observation of nature. But his true inductive method his successors soon let fall. Ancient and, still more mediæval, study of nature was dominated by assumptions which rendered it fruitless. But the interesting point is that in all possible combinations in which, throughout the whole history of thought, these three things had been set, the one with another, they had remained always three things, with no essential relation, the one to the other. They were like the points of a triangle of which any one stood over against the other two. God stood over against the man whom he had fashioned. God and man were mutually exclusive conceptions.

The consequences of this for theology were such as these. When men wished to describe Jesus as the son of God, they laid emphasis upon everything which he had or was supposed to have which was not common to him and other men. They lost sight of that profound interest of religion which has always claimed that in some sense all men are sons of God, and that Jesus was the true son of man. Jesus must be unique in having nothing of the human. Man could have nothing of the divine until in redemption it was conferred upon him. Similarly, when men spoke of revelation, they laid emphasis upon those particulars in which this sup-

posed method of attaining information was unlike all other methods. The knowledge derived from God was in no sense parallel to the knowledge derived by man in any other way. So also God stood over against nature and nature against God. The supernatural was the realm of God. The natural was a realm which, however much it might be supposed to have had its origin in God, was not now the realm of his activity, save as he exercised his power to intervene in it. The natural and the supernatural were mutually exclusive conceptions just as before the divine and human. So also, on the third side of our triangle, man stood over against nature and nature against man. Nature was the realm of capricious or malevolent spirits, and then of an iron necessity, of all-destroying forces, of cruel and indifferent fate. A real bond between man and nature did not exist, least of all at the point of his religious experience. The antithesis of nature and grace was as absolute as those others which we named above.

It is as easy to say that much of the utterance of the religious intuition of Jesus ran counter to this dualistic view of the universe. We may say that without attributing to Jesus any knowledge of the philosophizing of his day or any interest in it. But the accepted interpretation of the religious intuition of Jesus which hardened into dogma and was imposed as the very essence of faith upon fifty generations of Christians was all run in this dualistic mould. It was only toward the end of the 18th century that the philosophical movement began in Europe which furnished us with quite another mode

of reflection. It was far on toward the middle of the 19th century before that movement began to make itself felt in great force in America.

Upon this ancient basis the trinitarian dogma may be viewed as the assertion of this quality of Jesus by which he is one with God and separate from man, or, as the extreme statement has it, he is God, and yet, in the mystery of his unique personality, does not cease to be man. He is god-man, says the popular language, two distinct natures yet one person forever, says the creed, struggling to say something which can never perfectly be said, to rid of contradiction a notion which yet consists, to say the least, in a conjunction of opposites. There has always been a protest to the effect that the antinomy was insoluble. Clear thinking, it was alleged, obliged us to say that the opposites were irreconcilable, that Jesus, if he were God, was not man, and if he were true man he was not God.

It is obvious that defenders and assailants of the doctrine, alike, proceeded from the assumption that God and man are mutually exclusive conceptions. Men contended for the divineness of Jesus in terms which by definition shut out his true humanity, not perceiving that in the measure in which real humanity is excluded, true trinitarianism is sacrificed. They made of Jesus' humanity a semblance. If, for example, it was by conception impossible that Jesus should sin, it is clear that Jesus was not a character at all, in the sense in which we speak of the moral character of man as an achievement in righteousness through struggle and suffering. Or again, when men attributed to

the man of Nazareth the omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence of God, they made of his life a mere spectacle and play of self-restraint.

On the other hand, there is something almost pathetic in the way in which the men of the opposite party came near to a great discovery, and yet fatally shut themselves out from it. They rested in the purely imaginary distinction between divinity and deity. Impressed by the transcendent greatness of Jesus, they were willing to concede the divinity of Jesus. They meant by that so much of God as a man may hold without ceasing to be a mere man. Any length they were willing to go, short of giving up of the fact that he was a mere man. To admit the deity of Jesus seemed to them impossible, because it seemed to shut out his true humanity. But similarly, on the other side, to concede the real humanity of Jesus, seemed to shut out his deity. They had not reckoned with the fact which I am told the late Dean Everett used so pungently to phrase:—"Mere man? There is no such thing as mere man." Man is always participant in the life of God, and Jesus is only that one among men in whom that participation in the life of God was complete.

With the old definitions I do not think that we can wonder that the struggle was a bitter one. The bitterness of the controversy arose from the fact that, from their own points of view, both parties were right. People who are fond of epigrams say sometimes that each party was right in that which it asserted and wrong in that which it denied. The point with which I am here concerned is this, that the one party, as truly as the other, had operated with

philosophical distinctions which had reigned from Plato to Kant. The doing away with those distinctions was never more than vaguely felt in this country until after the unitarian schism had been long a matter of history.

If man is by definition other than God, and God the antithesis of man, then the attempt to say that Jesus was both must remain mysticism to the one party and folly to the other. But if the points of our triangle no longer stand the one over against the others, but a perfect circle joins them, if character human and divine differ only in degree, if nature is supernatural to the core, and the supernatural natural to its limit, if Jesus merely shows forth in incomparable fulness that relation to God which is the ideal for every man, then the common postulates from which our fathers set out would seem to have been at the bottom of their differences. And equally, with the fading of those postulates from the minds of us all, we would seem to have left those differences far behind.

We seem, in the idealistic philosophy, in the new view of Scripture, in the change which has come over our view of nature, to be furnished with the means of being just to the contentions of both parties, or rather, to a larger truth than either party then perceived. We seem to gain ground for the combination of some truths for which the true men of both parties were striving. We seem to be able to escape some errors into which true thinkers of both parties fell. It cannot be said that either of the ancient contentions has triumphed. It can hardly be said that either of them has survived. It

is certain that no compromise has taken place. With the ancient definitions no compromise was possible. It is the definitions which have been done away. The premises are so altered that a large part of the classical argument is put out of court. It interests us only as history. It is significant for us only as having once interested very able and earnest men. But it has no reality for us.

When one considers the orthodox formulas which seemed sometimes to have been almost willfully put forth, as if men rejoiced to prostrate themselves before the mystery which they could never hope to solve, one must stand amazed before the fact that so large part of the human race which has ever professed Christianity at all has been unwilling to relinquish its contention that in some way Jesus was both divine and human. No phenomenon of the magnitude and permanence of this one can be without its explanation. It can be accounted for only by the indefeasible instinct that he who was to do for men that which Christianity alleges that Christ does, must be, in some sense, both human and divine, both son of Man and son of God. That the orthodox were not fortunate in discovering in what sense this could be alleged, we must admit. But we must honor men who held fast to the great mystery rather than submit to a trivial resolution of it. We must honor, not less, the men who insisted, on the other hand, that there must be a real and worthy solution of the mystery. We must bow before the true protest on behalf of the humanity of Jesus, without which his divineness, as we now see it, would be a meaningless superstition. In the sharp contention of

these opposing principles the way was revealed which led to a larger statement comprehending both the truths. That we are able to speak of these things now with such calmness and hope is something to give thanks for. Whether we find ourselves in literal agreement with positions taken up two or twenty generations ago is a smaller matter. After all, if the whole result of the labor of the world's thought were that we should find ourselves just where men were generations ago, what would be the use of so much thinking?

THE INFLUENCE OF CONGREGATIONALISM UPON THE NATION'S RELIGION

BY

CHARLES EDWARD PARK

THE INFLUENCE OF CONGREGATIONALISM UPON THE NATION'S RELIGION

The title of this paper sounds, to be sure, rather self-complacent. It might seem to indicate in us the habit of looking upon our Congregationalism as being the oldest and most potent religious factor of our country, and one from which there has gone forth a wide-spread influence which has been felt by the religious life of the whole country. While there may be certain good grounds for this self-complacency, it is from anything but a complacent point of view that we approach this topic.

The earliest type of Christianity to set foot upon these American shores was, of course, the Roman Catholic. Its foothold upon the English Colonies was, however, both insecure and short-lived. The next type of Christianity, in point of time, to be introduced here was the Puritan Church of England, at Jamestown, in 1607. And the third type was the Separatist Puritan, of Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620, the type to which the Massachusetts Puritanism of 1630 very speedily gravitated. These two types are the origin of our American Congregationalism. We may justly claim, therefore, not the greatest antiquity, but the next to the greatest, for our Congregational type of Christianity. Doubtless we are welcome to whatever self-complacency we may

wish to derive from that comparatively trivial accident of birth. We are to consider some of the particulars in which this Congregationalism of ours, dating back to the Separatist Church of Plymouth Colony in 1620, may be shown to have influenced, or may be supposed to have influenced, the religious life of our country.

While we may claim that our Congregationalism has been an influencing factor, we must not forget to make the admission that our Congregationalism has, on the other hand, been very profoundly influenced by other religious forces of our history. For instance, in the very earliest generations it was influenced by its rivalry with and its hatred towards the Baptists; and in one particular the effect of this influence was to drive it into a position of rank inconsistency. Because the Baptists refused to administer the rite of baptism to those who were as yet too young to formulate a personal faith, the Congregational churches of the seventeenth century deliberately practised infant baptism; although it smacked of Popery, although to do so was to be downright inconsistent, although they might have foreseen that the custom thus established was destined to lead them within the next two generations into all manner of difficulties, yet so bitter was their feeling, they were ready and anxious to institute any custom which should emphasize a fundamental point of divergence from their hated rivals, the Baptists.

Again, it is beyond question that the Congregational churches of the seventeenth century were influenced by Presbyterianism, or at least that they felt

the potency of the influences which produced Presbyterianism. The tendency to officialism, or ecclesiasticism, or solidification was present in Colonial Massachusetts, just as it was in England or Scotland. And it was only through the conscious effort of the leading ministers of that time that the Congregational Churches of New England were sheered off from the tendency to Presbyterianism, and were forced into the current of a pure Congregational polity.

Again, there is no doubt that Congregationalism was profoundly and beneficially influenced in the middle of the eighteenth century by the new Methodism. The Fatalism of the old Calvinistic point of view had, to be sure, been somewhat qualified during the first quarter of the eighteenth century by an increasing intellectual emphasis placed upon the "means" of salvation, and a throwing of the "means" into some better intellectual importance as a condition of salvation. Herein we may see the workings of that Arminianism which was brought over from Europe about this time, and which pretty generally infected the Congregationalism of Eastern Massachusetts. And yet this qualified fatalism was not qualified sufficiently to make any strong appeal to the heart of the individual—so as to arouse him to a real personal effort. It was an intellectual qualification. Just at this time however, Methodism appeared, representing an Arminianism that made a direct, forceful, emotional appeal to the heart and will of the individual, urging him to make the most of the "means" of salvation, assuring him that such "means" would in very truth be

efficacious, and so presenting the problem of salvation in such a way as to make it largely dependent upon his own personal will and choice. The presence of such a rival in the field had the effect of wonderfully stimulating and arousing the Arminian Congregationalists. To this extent our Congregationalism owes its debt of gratitude to Methodism.

These considerations may effectually shield us from the charge of self-complacency in considering the influence of Congregationalism upon the religion of our country. We are by no means blind to the fact that we have been influenced in turn. We make the admission with all gratitude and humility.

In a sense, the influence of Congregationalism upon the religion of our country is obvious and self-evident. It almost lends itself to statistical tabulation. Take for example, the one great traditional characteristic which it has ever boasted—its insistence upon an educated ministry; and right there we have touched a point where its influence upon our nation has been far reaching and profound. To be sure, this was a characteristic which it shared, and still shares, with its Presbyterian cousin. But as we shall see, perhaps, it does not lay upon its ministry the handicaps under which Presbyterian ministers have, up to very recent years labored, (I mean the dread of the heresy trial), and in this way it gets the full benefit of the educated thought and spiritual experience of its ministers. In this matter alone, of an educated ministry, free to preach and proclaim the results of their educated thought and their educated spiritual experience, the Congregationalists have exerted a great influence upon the nation's religion.

This traditional insistence upon an educated ministry has given birth to a still more practical influence—because they insisted upon an educated ministry, the next step necessarily was to furnish the opportunities whereby their incipient ministry might receive education. This meant the founding of schools and colleges. In proportion to its numbers and wealth, Congregationalism has founded more educational institutions than any other single denomination. I think it would be safe to put it even more strongly than that. But it is hardly necessary. We may allow the facts to speak for themselves. The two oldest and largest of our Universities are of Congregational origin—were, in fact, virtually divinity schools in their primary character, intended specifically to fit young men for the calling of the ministry among our New England Congregational Churches. From these two Universities countless educational influences, aspirations, ideals and standards have radiated all over the country, which have borne fruit in many a college, seminary and preparatory school.

The Congregationalists have been pre-eminently the religious educators of the nation. This has been their specialty, one which they have accomplished not alone by their insistence upon an educated ministry and by their care to furnish the opportunities by which this education may be secured, but, as though realizing that an educated minister must of necessity cast his pearls before swine unless he can address an educated people, they have further expanded this special function of theirs by means of Religious Journalism. Congregationalists have been,

even if they no longer are, the leaders of religious journalism. Inasmuch as the religious journal exists, primarily, not for the minister but for the layman, we may be justified in claiming that Congregationalists have always been keenly awake to the advantages of a general and a widespread culture to the religious life of a community.

Congregationalists have been characterized in the past, more than any sect save possibly the Moravians, by a feeling of responsibility for the spiritual welfare and safety of others. They have been religious altruists. What the origin of this trait may be, we cannot say. Whether it was purely fortuitous, or in some way the logical outcome of that Calvinism of which they are the offspring, and of which it has been said that it was the first theological system to make religion a *personal* matter, to make the individual soul the center, the unit, the focal point of its emphasis, it is not for us to determine. The fact remains that the welfare of the individual soul has been the main consideration with Congregationalists, not only their own but other people's souls. They have been conspicuous for their spiritual solicitude.

This characteristic in them has prompted them to institute a number of missionary enterprises which may be conceded to have had a marked influence for good upon the nation's religious life. Of course this means home-missionary enterprises principally. And yet foreign missions are not to be excluded as an influence upon the home nation's religious life. For a good, active foreign missionary enterprise is bound to have a real reactionary influence upon its own missionaries, and through them,

upon the religious life of the missionary's home nation. More than one so-called heretic, whose expanding mind has rent asunder the constrictions of his own orthodoxy, has had to confess, in the retrospect, that the bacillus of his heresy has been picked up in the missionary field, by contamination with either the naive simplicity of the untutored savage, or the logical astuteness of some highly civilized pagan philosopher. However that may be, the home and foreign missionary enterprises of our country, while not of peculiarly Congregational origin, were supported generously from the first by Congregationalists and have been a real influence upon the nation's religious life. The first ten years of the nineteenth century witnessed the organization of at least fourteen missionary and Bible Societies, all of them among the Congregationalists of New England. And during the first forty years of the nineteenth century the Congregationalists of New England principally of Connecticut and Massachusetts, planted something like fifteen hundred churches in the West, and contributed in the aggregate something like $2,000,000 for their support.

In comparison with most other denominations, Congregationalists are and have been conspicuous for the excellence of their preaching. Not counting the evangelists, the great Protestant preachers of our nation have been for the most part Congregationalists. This was true of the Calvinistic churches of New England far back in Colonial times, as we may discover for ourselves by taking note of the vast number of sermons, expositions, essays, inquiries, and pamphlets that have been preserved in print. To

be sure, the mere fact that something is printed is, with us, no guarantee whatever of its excellence. We may rush into print these days with alarming ease and cheapness. But it is a safe assumption that in Colonial times, a piece of literature had to be exceptionally good, it had to be considered distinctly worth while when measured by the standard prevailing at the time, to get into print. And we are told that the productions of New England pens were very highly esteemed, even in Old England; and that, judging from the number of editions through which they ran, there was scarcely any homiletical product so popular and so highly cherished in Old England as the sermons of Thomas Hooker of Connecticut. In this respect Colonial New England presents a striking contrast to Colonial New York and Colonial Virginia. For up here we were dwelling in an atmosphere of decided intellectual ability and no mean literary achievement, while as yet New York was merely a trading post, given up wholly to its commencial enterprise, and while as yet Governor Berkeley in Virginia was thanking God that there was neither school nor printing-press in all his colony, and hoping it would be a hundred years before any came.

This preëminence in literary and homiletical achievement Congregational New England maintained for a great many years. It was with these tastes and standards that her sons migrated in vast quantities westward to Ohio, Illinois, and into the fecund homesteads of the Louisiana Purchase. And it was these qualifications and abilities that New England's missionaries took with them when they

followed closely in the wake of their migrating lay brethren, and established the new churches and determined the quality of the new religious life of that new Western Country.

In all these ways, its insistence upon an educated ministry, its eagerness to provide means of education, its appreciation of the religious importance of learning, its journalism, its missionary activity at home and abroad, its intellectual power and preaching quality, Congregationalism has exerted an undeniable influence upon the religious life of the nation. These are the more obvious, the more self-evident ways in which its influence may be shown.

There is another particular in which the influence of Congregationalism has been real but unsuspected, profound but in the same proportion obscure. When we speak of Congregationalism we mean strictly, not a system of theological thought or dogma, but a system of church polity; a system which seemed to be based upon biblical or at least apostolic precedent; a system which for all practical purposes originated with John Calvin, was further emphasized and expounded by Robert Browne, was first put into practice by the English separatists of Gainsboro, Scooby and Leyden, was brought to America in the Mayflower, and was adopted and established with surprising readiness by the unseparated Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, and developed by them into what has been called New England Congregationalism. This system or polity of church government is what we mean when we use the word Congregationalism in its strictly proper sense. I think it can be shown that this Congregational *polity* of ours has

had a really profound influence upon the religious life and development of the nation.

It were carrying coals to Newcastle for me to attempt any definition of the Congregational polity before this assemblage. Permit me, however, to remind you of the two fundamental and mutually complementary principles that underlie Congregationalism as a polity. They are, first, the independence of the individual churches, and, second, the bond of fellowship between the individual churches. On those two piers our Congregational bridge is built, freedom and fellowship. How then has this polity, the two halves of which are the Freedom of the individual church and the Fellowship of the individual churches, been able to influence the religious life of the nation? Right here it is necessary to make an assumption which may sound bold and groundless to some of us, but for which there is some good basis of argument, namely that a theology, in order to endure, must progress; must keep abreast step by step with the enlargements of thought structure, with the changes in religious experience, with the transformations in the intellectual environment of the nation in which it is to find a home. This assertion, that the permanence of a theology depends upon its capacity for progress and revision, springs, of course, from a point of view that is diametrically opposed to that which looks upon theology as the human understanding of a religion or a truth once definitely and forever revealed by God. If we take that view of Religion, that it is a compacted revelation, finished and sealed, then we cannot harbor or permit any hint or thought of theological change or theological progress.

This, however, is not the Calvinistic point of view. At least, it is not the point of view of those Calvinists to whom we look as to our spiritual ancestors. The Plymouth Separatists and the Massachusetts Puritans alike denied that the entire word of God had been revealed, or that what had been revealed was perfectly and infallibly summarized in human words and understandings. These ancestors of ours were grateful for what they had learned, and were in hopes of learning more. And this hope of learning more of God's truth in days to come was as dear to their hearts as the contemplation of what they considered already learned. And so we have most excellent John Robinson assuring his hearers that he was perfectly certain that God had more light to break forth upon them from out His holy word, and we have the Plymouth church gathered under a covenant which bound them together as the Lord's free people, "to walk in all his ways, made known, or *to be* made known unto them, according to their best endeavors." Similar clauses, expressing the same hope of more truth *to be* learned, better ways of living *to be* made known, may be found in many an ancient covenant of our New England churches. The inference is plain. Our forefathers saw the need and cherished the hope of theological progress. Our inheritance from them is an inheritance of open-mindedness.

We have this justification for making our assertion, therefore, that theology, in order to prove itself durable and useful, must be capable of such changes and advancements as a changing religious experience and a changing intellectual environment would seem

to necessitate. These influences to change are truly very potent influences. However it may be with our theology, our religious experience and our intellectual environment have undergone profound changes, and are undergoing them day by day. And unless our theology is able to keep pace with those changes, unless it is able to furnish for each larger occasion the larger thought of God, for each greater duty the greater incentive, for each bigger problem the bigger faith, and for each more powerful temptation the more powerful restraint, it is doomed within a generation or two to pass into a mere byword and a reproach. A theology capable of progress is the only theology that will be durable and profitable to this progressing nation. Or to confine ourselves to the strictly historical altitude, it is only as theology in this country has proved itself adaptable and progressive that it has endured as a useful and desirable factor in our national life.

Granted that progress has been not only desirable, but indispensable to theological permanence in the past, we may next ask, what is the method by which a system of thought or a type of theology progresses? We find an answer in the analogous case of a type of living organism. Our doctors of science and our evolutionists have told us repeatedly that types of organic life gradually secure their perfect adaptation by producing infinite variations of type, subjecting those variations to the test of the environment, and trusting the brute forces of nature to eliminate the unsatisfactory variations and to perpetuate those that prove themselves, in the actual analysis, fit to survive. Herbert Spencer, as usual, gives us a con-

crete example: a pair of parent cod-fishes will spawn a million cod-fish fry. There are a million variations of type. Those million cod-fish fry, each one equipped or handicapped, as the case may be, by the traits of his peculiar variation, will be cast forth to endure the analysis of actual conditions, to be tested out by the grim facts of the environment. It has been estimated that only two of those million are able to survive the test. The rest are found to be unfit to survive and are eliminated. These surviving two will possess and will perpetuate to their offspring those especial variations which conduce to their survival, and thus the type of cod-fish is kept perfectly adapted to its environment.

You will, perhaps, think my analogy an unfortunate one, but I beg you to let it pass. Theology secures its progress and maintains its perfect adaptation by the same process. Starting from the parent stock there are produced numberless variations of type. These variations are subjected to the test of actual experience, to the analysis of life's actual facts, occasions, demands, and exigencies. Those one or two variations which best survive the fires of this analysis are kept and perpetuated, and determine the surviving traits of that theology. The other variations gradually sink into an oblivion from which none but the idle antiquary ever cares to drag them. In this way that particular type of theological thought maintains its perfect adaptation to changing religious and intellectual conditions. In this way it grows and survives.

Now, my only point is this: that the Congregational polity is the mechanism through which this

process of theological growth and adaptation has found its line of least resistance. In Congregationalism we have a cluster of churches which are, by the terms of our hypothesis, independent of each other, independent of all external episcopal or hierarchical control. These free churches are, or at least have been, composed of comparatively learned people, and ministered unto by clergymen of education, of intellectual and spiritual power. Granted the bond of warm and sympathetic confidence, mutual trust and support between each church and its minister, those ministers are free to think, free to speak, free to expound whatever variations of theological type their own personal experience, observation, and study suggest to them as being profitable. There we have the infinite variations of theological type, forthcoming from the mutually independent and severally self-sufficient pulpits of our Congregational churches.

But, according to the second half of our hypothesis, these Congregational churches of ours are held together in a fellowship—a fellowship of faith, of purpose, of mutual respect and esteem. This fellowship finds expression in exchanges, in conferences, in advisory councils, during which theological views are interchanged and theological preferences and enunciations are discussed. In the various occasions of our Congregational fellowships there is furnished the opportunity for the thorough and intelligent analysis, criticism, and testing of the sundry variations of theological type which have been furnished by different independent pulpits. As a result of this analysis and criticism, furnished by fellowship, the

less worthy variations of type are rejected, the more worthy are adopted, and become in turn the parent theological stock from which future generations of independent thinkers will evolve their several variations. So the process repeats itself, and in fact has repeated itself in the past. Of all ecclesiastical forms and systems, the Congregational Polity is the one which has furnished the line of least resistance, the readiest vehicle for the working out of the process of theological growth. This is the theory.

It is noteworthy how closely actual practice has stuck to the theory. It is noteworthy that so distinct a school of religious thinking as the "New England Theology," so-called, should have arisen, flourished, and declined within the Congregational body without causing the appearance of the smallest sectarian fissure. The Great Awakening brought division into New England, but it was a division into ways of thinking and not into sects. It is noteworthy also that upon the two occasions when Congregationalism has departed from its polity of freedom and of fellowship, it was at the instigation of men who were bitterly afraid of *theological* change. In 1705 when the Mathers came before this very body with their famous proposals, which, by enlarging the powers of the Ministerial Association and by establishing standing councils of the churches, sought to "freeze out" the newly organized Brattle Church with which the Mathers had no sympathy; and again in 1801-2 when Jedediah Morse and others founded the Massachusetts General Association, with powers more efficient and arbitrary than those exercised by the Ministerial Convention, by means of which they

hoped to purge the "anti-trinitarians" from the fold. Both these incidents were departures from true Congregational polity, and both were attempted by men who shrank from theological change. Their testimony is illuminating. The perfect Congregational polity lends itself almost perfectly to theological progress. And those who would hinder theological progress in the past have endeavored to gain their ends by departing from the perfect Congregational polity.

That our Congregational polity is the only one which lends itself well and thoroughly to theological progress is an assertion which the careful man would be very slow to make. But that it does lend itself to theological progress, and that of all the various types of church polity which have been exercised in the religious history of our country, the Congregational polity stands out conspicuously preëminent as offering the path of least resistance to theological progress, is an assertion which any reader of history can make with safety.

In this particular the influence of Congregationalism upon the nation's religious development has been profound and at the same time unseen and unsuspected. Where the facilities of a nation's intellectual intercourse are so open and ready as they are in our country, the mere presence of a progressive theology in one corner of the country is sure to exert its influence upon the theology of the whole country. We may except from such influence only those portions of the country which have not kept clean their channels of communication with the intellectual currents of the country as a whole. Where a chain of

lakes is connected by a system of water-ways, the water level in one lake will be identical with the water level in them all. Where our various denominational lakes are connected by the thought-channels of journalism, book and magazine publication, personal intercourse, lecture platforms, college professorships, pulpits, and the thousand and one points of mental contact that knit our great nation into one unified organism, it is inevitable that the high theological level of one denominational lake shall tend to raise the level of all the others. This then has been, and let us hope still is, the influence of Congregationalism upon the nation's Religious Life.

You say with some justice that this is a purely conjectural conclusion, and that there are no facts to support such an opinion, attractive though it may be, and gratifying to our pride. True enough—it is largely a matter of conjecture. It is next to impossible, if not quite, to gather facts and figures in support of such a conclusion. Conjecture must necessarily enter into the case. Yet, if there are not facts, are there not indications to assure us that the conjecture is a safe one? Take the case of Presbyterianism.

Presbyterians as a denomination owe to Congregationalism a larger debt than they can ever repay—not only for the good Congregational men, women, and dollars who went bodily over to Presbyterianism as a result of the famous "System of Accommodation," and the still more famous "Plan of Union" adopted in 1801, but also for the freedom of thought and speech, the right of individual judgment, the independence of the self-poised man and the self-poised

church, which these Congregationalist accessions took with them into the Presbyterian body. When, in the General Assembly of 1837, the four great synods of New School Presbyterians, composed almost entirely of these accessions from Congregationalism, were summarily excommunicated, the observing student may find in the act a testimony to the progressive power of Congregationalism. It was, with a vengeance, cutting off the hand that offended. And when, thirty years later, these two wings of the Presbyterian Church, the Old School and the New School, again consolidated in one powerful organization, it was with the significant understanding that the New School would make concessions to the Old School in matters of polity, and that the Old School would make concessions to the New School in matters of doctrine. Yet in spite of all concessions, the influence of Congregationalism has remained, and our Presbyterianism of today, with its religious depth and earnestness, its theological freshness and vigor, its freedom from heresy trials, and its newborn tolerance, and its general aptness and ability to meet and satisfy the religious wants of its people, can thank New England Congregationalism very copiously for making it what it is. In considering the influence of Congregationalism upon Presbyterianism, we are on ground that is considerably firmer than mere conjecture.

And so in like measure, howbeit to a less degree, with the other great denominations. It is a piece of sheer recklessness to say that it is only as Methodism and Episcopalianism have, either avowedly or tacitly, adopted the Congregational principles: Free-

dom of the Individual Church, Fellowship among the Churches, that they have been enabled to meet the demands and fulfill the religious obligations that changing thought and experience put upon them. And yet one is tempted, in moments of enthusiasm, to be just that reckless and to make just that statement. At all events, we may conclude these rather ragged observations by noticing a somewhat significant geographical fact.

In the great westward migrations of the first half of the nineteenth century, the New England pioneers stuck pretty closely to that zone which was bounded north and south by the parallels of latitude which bound their own rugged New England. In a general way, they simply pushed west along that zone. Thus we have western New York, northern Pennsylvania, northern Ohio, northern Indiana, southern Michigan, northern Illinois, and southern Wisconsin pretty thoroughly settled by New England stock, pretty thoroughly permeated by New England traditions and institutions. Like the old navigators of three centuries ago, New England pioneers have stuck to their parallel of latitude and have simply pushed west along that parallel. It is precisely along that parallel of latitude, it is precisely within that zone, that one finds today the purest, the richest, the best religious life of our country. Is that just a fortuitous coincidence? Or are we justified in maintaining that it is the influence of the old New England Congregationalism making itself felt after two and three generations in a clearer perception of human duty and worship, in a better thought of God and in a sweeter hope of Heaven?

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

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REDEMPTION OR RECOVERY?

THE UNITARIAN ANSWER

BY

REV. MINOT SIMONS

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

REDEMPTION OR RECOVERY

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.—EZRA xviii. 27.

For this my son was dead and is alive again ; he was lost and is found.—LUKE xv. 24.

Nothing better indicates the change in religious beliefs than the fact that we can approach such a subject as this with profound hope in our hearts and with the deep conviction that we are dealing with God's nature of things and not with the arbitrary will of a Heavenly Sovereign.

In human nature the sense of moral responsibility to God is fundamental. The sense of sin, the realization of having wilfully chosen the wrong in defiance of God's right, is the most harrowing burden of the human soul. No shadow over the world is so black as the shadow of its sin, and no other problem of its life is so complicated. The moral conflict has been the mightiest conflict on earth, and the chief aim of all religions has been to help mankind decide the conflict in favor of God or to appease the divine anger when sin has triumphed.

Christianity was forced during the debates of the so-called Church Fathers of the fourth century, to incorporate into its theology the dogma that the human race sinned in Adam's sin; *i.e.*, that Adam's sin corrupted human nature and put it into a state of enmity toward God. As mankind could not save

itself because of such a corrupted nature, God took upon himself, in the person of the Son, the penalty which mankind deserved, and thus redeemed all who accepted the atonement.

There have been various theories of the atonement, but in a general way they have all set forth the idea that by the sin of Adam the divine government had been defied. The corrupted human nature continued that defiance, and thus all humanity passed under "the just condemnation unto eternal death." If the sentence were ever to be lifted, it must be by some method that would still preserve the dignity and justice of the divine government, and so the Second Person in the Godhead volunteered to take upon himself the sufferings necessary to satisfy this divine justice. He that was without sin was willing to be made sin that we who are sinful might be saved. As his nature was infinite, he could in a short time suffer as much penalty as the sinful race would have suffered in all eternity. The Father accepts such a substitute. Hence they who accept the atoning death of Christ are thereby redeemed and God's moral govenment is maintained.

Such is the dogma of the atonement in historic Christianity. There is no time now to point out its impossibilities. It has been the great error of the Christian religion, and its weight of woe upon the world is incalculable. It is without the slightest evidence. It takes us back to ancient mythology. The dogma of the Fall of Man and of the corruption of human nature is an insult to ordinary intelligence; and, with this foundation gone, what becomes of the building raised upon it? It ought to come down, and it would if it were a material struc-

ture. Somehow people seem able to keep their thought structures intact, even when the foundation has been carried away.

Think of the conception of the divine government implied by such a doctrine. Think of rejoicing at a salvation purchased by the sufferings of an innocent person. Think of the moral character of a God who can be a party to such an arrangement. Think of weighing so much suffering over against so much disobedience in order to make possible so much redemption. Think of a twentieth-century religion burdened by such a scheme, so ethically childish in every feature. I turn from it with the thought that it belongs with the undeveloped ideas of a far past.

If there is any one here who is pained by such remarks, I sincerely trust that the pain will turn out to be a growing pain. I realize that some of the sweetest and deepest sentiments of the human heart have gathered about the Christian doctrine of the atonement; but they testify to the lovingness and lovableness of the human spirit, and not to the truth of the doctrine. A Unitarian practises considerable restraint when he says no more than I have said about a doctrine which not only has no historic justification, but is monstrously immoral. I wonder that the Christian people have not realized how utterly it is condemned by the teaching of Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

What the human race needs is not redemption, but education. What the sinful soul needs is not redemption but recovery.

More and more we realize the significance of the evolution of humanity from a low state toward a higher state. Humanity began in ignorance and

weakness, and it has had to work its way to knowledge and strength by experience. Man has inevitably sinned because he has been weak. Shall we not assume that God knows that fact as well as we know it?

The significance of human sin cannot be exaggerated from the point of view of humanity, but Christianity has grievously exaggerated it from the point of view of God. God himself is bringing humanity up to a knowledge of himself as humanity overcomes its weakness and ignorance. Never forget that. And, if God is loving and just, he must hold the individual soul accountable only to the extent of its strength and knowledge.

God has set mankind in a nature of things, both physically and spiritually determined according to his own laws. Man's destiny, then, is to find out those laws, and to realize that the way of life and of happiness is in obedience to those laws. When man sins, I cannot think that God is vindictive,—only insistent that, sooner or later, the lesson of obedience shall be learned.

"The Soul that sinneth, it shall die"—to the extent of the sin. This law of life is absolute and unsparing. I see a boy writing upon a window pane with a diamond point, and suddenly he discovers that he cannot rub it out. And, when I see him trifling with the laws of life, writing evil upon his mind and heart and body, I wish he could realize as clearly that he must not do it, because he cannot rub it out.

Our sins at first are small, but they may grow. They may not come to light, but the law is at work. Outwardly a man may be prosperous; inwardly he

may be bankrupt. Outwardly he may seem strong: inwardly his moral vitality may be eaten out.

There is an ancient tradition which says that Solomon's power over evil spirits depended upon a staff upon which he always leaned. Small ants, however, came up from the ground and ate their way up the heart of the staff, until one day, as he was leaning upon it, the staff crumbled into dust beneath his weight. After that his mysterious power was at an end. The story might be a parable of the vices and follies of life, small as they may seem.

There is something absolute and unsparing about the natural working of the moral law, and in this aspect it is an appalling thing. If we sin, we suffer. The penalty is self-inflicted. Our human punishments are clumsy and uncertain. They have no necessary vital connection with the wrong. In one state a man may be fined fifty dollars for stealing a horse: in another state he may be hanged for the same offence. The mistake the world has made, has been to estimate God's penalties in the same arbitrary terms.

To-day we realize that God's nature of things involves both its rewards and punishments. The real penalties follow the sin itself. If we lie, we become liars: if we steal, we become thieves: if we yield to the lusts of the flesh, we become impure, unclean,—that is, we become different, in the likeness of the sin. Referring to the Prodigal's return, an evangelical preacher said, "The penitent abandonment of sin blotted out sin, made it as though it had not been,—the past does not count with him, the past is rubbed out." But no! Nothing can be wiped out that has ever been. Some effect of it must re-

main. Every thought, word, deed, becomes a cause for something else, which in its turn becomes a cause, and so on. There is no end to it. The past lives on forever. In scientific literalness it cannot be rubbed out.

Old Dr. Arnold, the famous Master of Rugby, once said that in a moment of anger he unjustly punished one of his boys, and that, if he lived to all eternity, he would never cease to be ashamed and sorry for that act. How can it be otherwise? And yet, to carry out this particular thought and then have done with it, may we not also fairly expect that as time and hope soften the keenest sorrow, so time and consecration will soften the keenest remorse? God's nature of things, both in the physical and spiritual realms, is implacable toward disobedience, but encouraging and restoring toward obedience. The weight of remorse may be removed when the evil is worked over into good. Something like this is my expectation when I take the long view.

But such a view involves our conception of recovery. What do we mean by recovery from sin? If we see that penalties follow naturally and inevitably as effects from causes, then our idea of recovery must be adjusted to the same great law of life.

Canon Farrar has said: "Forgiveness of Sin is that act of God's free grace by which, in virtue of the merits of Christ's atonement appropriated by faith, he frees the sinner who accepts Christ by such faith from the guilt and penalty of his sins. The sinner is forgiven freely, as a free gift, not of right, not meritoriously, and not of desert." Such is the old point of view wherein no one ever thought it nec-

essary to consider the nature of things, and it must be wrong because it represents God as acting in an arbitrary and capricious way, regardless of the spiritual nature of things which we now know that he himself has established.

Redemption is external, something done for us: recovery is internal, something done by ourselves. Redemption is arbitrary: recovery is natural. The real penalties are inflicted within: recovery must be accomplished within. From the old point of view deliverance was from a place called Hell. Now it is from a condition called Hell. As Milton said:—

> "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell.
> And in the lowest deep a lower deep,
> Still threatening to devour me, opens wide."

From first to last, recovery is a matter of the inner life. Disobedience has brought the downfall: obedience must bring the uplift. There is nothing sudden: nothing easy. No one else can accomplish my recovery. Others can help, but I must make the effort. The impulse to recovery may start from without or within. It must work within. The recovery must be, in deepest truth, my own.

The old thought that a man's soul was saved for him was easy and simple, but it was wrong because contrary to nature. A deliverance that is simply free is worth little because it costs little. We are right with God only as we are right with his laws of life. If we make our character, we must at times remake it.

Now if I choose to sin, I choose to become a different man. My moral vision becomes clouded, my sense of moral values becomes dulled. And yet my heart may cry out in remorse as the Psalmist cried

out: "My sins have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up; my heart faileth me." What must I do to recover? What must I do to get me a heart wherewith again to look up?

In the first place I must want to recover. If a man has no such desire, his moral nature is as one paralyzed. But, if he has a deep-hearted wish to get back, the instinctive thing is to lift the wish into the Divine Presence within him. After the battle of Antietam a doctor entered one of the hospital tents and asked a man lying on a cot, where he was hurt. The man simply held up a swollen and battered arm, and the doctor could readily see what was the trouble. And so, when a man has a wounded soul, he does not need to say much, but just hold it up to the Divine Presence within him for encouragement.

Then I must believe that I can recover. I may feel that my sin is greater than I can bear, greater than I can retrieve. But not so! Others have returned from the deepest depths. For seven years John B. Gough was beaten and degraded by every form of dissipation, but there came a moment when he believed that he could lift himself from the depths. He signed a temperance pledge, and then shut himself into his wretched garret. Without food or sleep he battled for six days, and on the seventh he emerged into the sunlight, weak and famished, but a conqueror, a man to save others.

It can be done, for it has been done. Here is the moral value of the life of Jesus. If he were God, there is no moral inspiration from his life; but as a man, his moral supremacy is a direct challenge and encouragement to us all. We miss the significance of his life altogether if we simply emphasize his

death for us. Much more did he live for us. To believe that he lived for us is to believe that the kind of life he lived is the most important thing. To believe that the chief thing was his death, is to accept him as a kind of political key to the kingdom, to regard his death as something to "get in" on, like the slogan of a political party. Some of the basest characters of the world have thus been admitted to the kingdom by the Church.

I must want to recover; I must believe that I can recover, and then I must gather my energies for what? For the journey back. I cannot wish myself back, I must fight my way back.

The time came when the Prodigal said, "I will arise and go to my father." But the resolve did not transport him there. He was in a far country, and the journey home was a long one, doubtless full of difficulties, full of temptation and impulses to return to his evil life, full of fears about ever reaching home, and of misgivings as to what he should find when he reached there.

The price of our recovery is the journey back. Perhaps the stern vigor of the Divine Love is nowhere so apparent as in this demand for the individual effort. No matter how much I may repent, I must take the journey back. I may be assured that God is Love, that there is no divine wrath, but I also know that the matter of recovery is out of the region of mere sentiment and is forever in the region of the nature of things.

It is a question of condition. The truth is I am not as I was. The sin has produced a change in me. Consequently my recovery is a matter of my becoming different from what I am, a matter of disci-

pline and of righteous effort. I must rebuild what I have destroyed, I must make over the evil into good.

> "Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
> Which we ascribe to Heaven."

Such a recovery is not easy, but there is this to remember. The universe is not hostile. The nature of things that infallibly inflicts the penalty just as infallibly assists in the recovery. Disobedience reveals its austerity; obedience reveals its beneficence. Renewed obedience makes for renewed health. There is nothing arbitrary about it. It is all beautifully natural and hopeful. Once turned again into the right way, and new strength, courage, self-respect, consecration, joy, come with cumulative power. If there be no compromise with anything or anybody in that far country, the process of recovery goes steadily on.

And there are many helps, human and divine; friends stronger than we, good work, great thoughts, great hopes, the sense of returning strength and self-respect, the knowledge of divine approval and the opportunities to help others. To have made the journey back is a great thing; and sometimes you see men and women who have made it, passionately eager to go out and help to deliver others, and, perhaps without knowing it, they are themselves mightily strengthened by the help they give.

When have I recovered? When I can look the old temptation in the face and not be drawn to it. I may resist it, but as long as I am drawn to it, I have not recovered. When, however, I can look it in the eye and turn away, then, I shall not forget

and the effects of the sin may never be wholly wiped out, yet the old wound will heal. As we are all in the same process, sometime we may all regard each other's scars as the symbols of honorable triumphs.

Sometimes people go so far into the region of evil, their will to return becomes so weak that they seem utterly unable even to begin the journey back, and they sink down where they are, apparently lost. It is a pitiful sight. Yet I always recall the story of the lost cup in the laboratory of Faraday. One day a workman knocked a silver cup into a jar of acid. The cup disappeared, and to the workman there was utterly no hope of getting it back. But the great chemist came in, put certain chemicals into the jar, and precipitated every particle of silver to the bottom. The mass was then sent to the silversmith and the cup restored.

And so to the Great Chemist of the universe, with infinite resources, the apparently lost souls are not lost. Who can say with confidence that the will to recover has ever utterly disappeared in any sin-wrecked spirit? As a recent writer expressed it, "There is no man so fallen but the elements of the divine are still there." That is true. There is every reason to think so. All that is needed is the right motive, suggested in the right way and felt in the right way.

Sometimes such a motive is suggested by circumstances in this world, and we see an apparently broken spirit rise up and return to moral health and strength. And sometimes there are no human resources wise enough to reach the elements of the divine that are still there. But, as God is wise and as the Infinite Love must have infinite resources, the

right motive will somewhere be presented in the right way and felt in the right way by the elements of the divine that are still there. Such is a reasonable faith.

Indeed, I do not hesitate to say, when I think that human souls are not wise, not strong, not entirely responsible for their circumstances nor the influences to which they are subjected, that God is under an obligation to follow every child that he has brought into the world; to follow with his love, his penalties, not to punish, but to discipline and develop, always to appeal to the elements of the divine that are still there; never suddenly to lift them into Heaven nor Heaven into them, but as the crude metal is reshaped into the cup by the silversmith, so the crude divinity in the sin-wrecked souls must be reshaped by such processes as God has established for the making and the remaking of the soul.

I believe I know human nature well enough to know that persistent love will always conquer and compel. I believe that the Infinite God must be the Infinite Love in order to be God, and so I cannot believe that any human spirit can ever be lost to the Infinite Love.

Think of a sin-wrecked child of such a God, how wrecked God only knows, but weak, hopeless, crushed by its sin. Think of even one heart-throb wish, "Oh that I had not sinned, oh that I had not!" Why, it would thrill to the farthest confines of the universe, thrill through the very heart of the Infinite Love! Must I even suspect that such a wish might be in vain? No. I cannot even suspect it. Somehow the Divine Love will reach the elements of the divine that are still there, the deeps within

will answer to the deeps without. Somehow the Divine Love will vitalize that wish with a hope, then with a resolve, and then—the journey back for another prodigal child of God.

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 257]

IN DARKEST NATURALISM AND THE WAY OUT

BY

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BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

IN DARKEST NATURALISM AND THE WAY OUT

In the world of life a secular change of climate, as in the coming or passing of a glacial epoch, profoundly affects all animal and plant forms. Fortunately for us, physical conditions on our planet are wonderfully stable, and we human beings are able to adjust ourselves to the relatively slight alterations that actually occur. There are, however, great changes in what may be called the moral climate of the world which exert a profound influence on the sensitive spirit of man. A certain view of nature and man's relation thereto arises and prevails for centuries, producing a corresponding type of emotion and action. Then the thoughts of men are changed with the process of the suns: there is a new conception of nature and man and their relations, and the result is a profound alteration in the spiritual life of humanity. It has long been the fashion to exalt wilful faith and to disparage thought, to glorify practical philanthropy and defame philosophy, and the present unhappy situation is the result. For it is upon our outlook, upon our larger thoughts, upon our conception of the nature of the world and of humanity's place therein that our religious life largely depends. It is this which decides whether we shall be rational, sane, and joyous, or depressed in our

enthusiams and hopes. It makes a world of difference whether we have been able to attain to a spiritual interpretation of the universe, or feel compelled to accept a view according to which human life is a mere epiphenomenon in a vast physical, material mechanism, in which ideals are visions without basis in reality and all that is humanly precious is impermanent and fleeting.

The dire need of this time is for a philosophy that shall legitimate our aspirations and release faith and hope from their imprisonment, and that shall yet be true; for the present generation feels compelled to accept a view of nature and human life which is depressing in that it seems to negate longings that are not only deep, but that we instinctively know to be the noblest part of our endowment. The tragedy is that what is noble and divinely beautiful and precious should appear to be untrue.

Consider the situation; it is extraordinarily simple and easy to comprehend. Science grows more and ever more comprehensive. It finds natural causes for everything. The heavenly bodies were once supposed to be gods; they are now known to be material masses. Before Kepler's time it was supposed that each planet was guided in its orbital journey by an angel. The angels have all been dismissed, and instead we have $\frac{m V^2}{2}$ the formula for the work done, the energy expended in maintaining the planet's velocity. And so it is with storms, lightning, earthquakes, eclipses, and all natural phenomena whatever; for all things we either know or expect to find natural causes. The whole sidereal universe is regarded as a physical mechanism.

Confidence in science is increased by its immense practical successes. It assumes natural causes for diseases, and it is finding them and showing how they may be prevented. It multiplies the production and facilitates the distribution of the commodities which maintain the increasing population of the earth. We know it is true because we can trust our lives to it, and because it enormously increases our efficiency. But it has to do only with natural causes, not with spiritual agencies which may be propitiated by sacrifice and prayer. Moreover, as it advances, the impression becomes irresistible that the natural is all-inclusive. It is clearly an ordered whole, not only in space, but also in time. The evolutionists are victorious all along the line. No one doubts that the earth has reached its present condition by processes which are still in operation, and fewer and fewer doubt the natural origin of the human race. Further, we hear of the laws of evolution of human society, of civilization, of art, science, and even of religion. The very operations of our minds are in accord with psychological laws, and the freest will is farthest from caprice. Laws, orderly, natural processes, without and within, now and throughout the past, — this is what we see, or at least believe in.

That is we have ended in naturalism, and for many it is literally in "darkest naturalism," since, in the form in which they hold it, it acts like a blight upon the life of aspiration and religious faith. The reason that it is so depressing to them is that they are conscious of profound religious needs, yearnings, and experiences which they have been educated to regard as bound up with a belief in the supernatural. Naturalism seems, therefore, to threaten what is most

precious, to mean the suffocation of the spiritual life. In this situation there are three characteristic modes of reaction. Many clear, logical minds, realizing that the conclusions of science are not to be resisted, accept naturalism and bravely, even heroically, try to live without religion. They do this because the only religious views with which they are acquainted are clearly in contradiction with what for them is indisputably true.

Others there are whose religious feeling is so deep that they cannot accept what threatens to destroy it, and they are therefore driven to ignore science and sometimes even to deny the very existence of the material world. There is also a third class composed of those who can live neither without science nor without religion, who see the futility of opposing the knowledge that is so indispensable, and who at the same time know in their heart of hearts that religion is something more than mere falsehood or superstition. So they keep and use both; but, seeing no way of harmonizing these two necessities, they hold them carefully apart. They thus live a double, or rather, a divided, life. Entirely happy they can never be, since there is always the uneasy consciousness that the faith which is so precious may after all turn out to be untrue.

Such a situation is not satisfactory. It is not one in which we can contentedly rest. There is a way out of the confusion, a way out of darkest naturalism; but it is only for the sincere in thought, the brave and single-hearted. First of all, it is not through the will to believe, through tampering with the integrity of the mind. There is no hope in sophistication. in juggling with facts or attempts to

minimize the scope or validity of scientific truth. The way out is not backward along the path thought has travelled. Vain is the effort to find some nook or cranny in the cosmic process for a supernatural deity. Precarious is the faith of those who are looking for some place outside the realm of the natural for God and the higher nature of man. Thus, Alfred Russel Wallace agrees with Darwin that man's body was developed by natural process, but he makes an exception of the intelligence and higher moral qualities. Man's spiritual nature, he thinks, is superadded, not evolved. "The love of truth, the delight in beauty, the passion for justice, and the thrill of exaltation when we hear of any act of courageous self-sacrifice, are the workings in us of a higher nature which has not been developed by means of the struggle for material existence."

That Wallace has failed to make out his case, that the consensus of opinion is against him, will cause no regret to those who understand the real situation. Indeed, I can hardly imagine anything more disastrous to philosophy and religious faith than for Wallace's idea to have proved true. For all our hope lies, not in disproving naturalism, but in making it thoroughgoing. It is precisely because man is inside the natural realm, wholly inside and all of him inside, body, soul, and spirit, that we are not only justified by, but logically driven toward, a spiritual interpretation of the universe. For see, what is it that depressed us but our conception of nature as merely physical, as a material, mechanical process? But a process that includes man cannot be so conceived. That which is dead could not originate life, that which is material could not produce and sustain

civilization. When we are forming our conception of nature, we cannot leave man out. A nature that produces life, that blossoms out into consciousness, the love of truth, the passion for justice, the thirst for righteousness, and the longing for ideal perfection, is the only nature we know anything about. The trouble with our agnostics is that their thought halts when it ought to be thoroughgoing. It is clearly unjustifiable to form a conception of Nature from a study of her lower, more inorganic processes, leaving out her higher product, man, and then to suppose that Nature so conceived explains man. The fact is that human nature in its very highest development, in the visions of its poets and prophets, of its philosophers and men of science, is simply nature in its upper ranges. For man is no alien. He has not been injected into the realm of the natural from the outside. He is an outcome of the world-process, and no beautiful qualities that he has manifested have ever been drawn from an extraneous source.

All is natural, then? Yes. Including Jesus? Yes, including his life, his love, and his influence in the world. No rose on its stalk, no bird building its nest, no creature fulfilling the law of its being, is more natural than was Socrates drinking the hemlock or Jesus on the rood. From this conclusion there is absolutely no escape. It is only necessary to be clear-headed and see the significance of the truths and principles that we accept without hesitation, in order to have a religion once more. And what a magnificent view it is that now opens before us, and rewards us for refusing timidly to halt or compromise or attempt to go back! The vision is

that of a great process, seemingly material, physical, and mechanical in its lower ranges, but evolving at last into a world of conscious, aspiring beings, into faith, hope, and love, into philosophy, science, and art, into a vast society of social beings, with imperfections no doubt, yet with dreams of perfection and earnest efforts to find out and fulfil the law of their being. If, as is but fair, this great process be interpreted by its achievements and aspirations, rather than by its obscure beginnings, what must we say of it when we see that it has produced saints, sages, and saviors, and the still higher ideals which they worshipped, but did not attain? Yet the implication of darkest naturalism is that in the laws and forces of the physical part of the universe we have the real, essential nature. A more enlightened naturalism will say that the great process is to be judged by its outcome rather than by its earlier phases, and that the noblest fruits of its long development are the best expressions of its real nature.

Below the living realm natural processes may be unconscious. The mote in the air current and the sun in its course may be moved by forces as purely physical as they seem. And, though animals exhibit evidences of consciousness, there is nothing that leads us to suppose that any one of them has an ideal to which it strives to conform its life. In man, however, the great process becomes self-conscious. He strives to find and fulfil the law of his being: he co-operates in his own evolution. His worship is as natural a function as digestion, and for his further progress as necessary. When he ceases to adore and strive to realize ideals, he ceases to grow. His prayer, his longing for an unattained perfection,

is the impulse of growth become conscious. To dispense with religion, then, is to forego all further development, for the moral aspirations are merely anticipations of coming reality, the promise and potency of a nobler future.

To some this view will at first appear too religious, too inspiring, too beautiful to be true. Yet it is one which it is not merely permissible to hold. Rather it is a view to which we are driven when we acknowledge that man is no foreigner who has effected an entrance into the universe, but an outcome of its life. When we are consistent in our naturalism and draw the ultimate consequences of our scientific principles, the position I have been trying to state seems unescapable. A realization of the profound significance of this truth will bring again joyous faith and buoyant hope. Estimating nature by the spiritual values she has produced, we see that she must be as divine as our divinest dreams.

Another inference seems at least tenable. We have said that the world-process, like any other, is to be judged by its outcome rather than by its obscure beginnings and earlier phases, and that, when thought and love and duty and devotion to the ideals of perfection appear, the nature of Nature comes out. But is it not fair to estimate man himself in the same way? He also is a process which, like nature, has seemingly purely physical and animal beginnings, but which rises in favored situations to great heights of spiritual elevation. Can we not trust our instinctive feeling that this higher man is the real man? And, if we felt this truth to the full, would we doubt our immortality? Is it not because of the naturalistic habit of thought, because of the suspicion

that the real man is the physical organization, that the Easter hope is often difficult? Certain it is, at any rate, that in the most highly evolved specimens of our race we can see most clearly the true character of the reality that is the essence both of nature and man. Looked at in this way, the spiritual attitude of a man like Jesus, his sense of a filial relation to an over-arching love and trust in the eternal life, and the faith of Socrates in a divine man in men, have significance for us who share the same nature, but are less highly evolved. It seems rational to trust what they trusted.

To this general position slow-going, constructive thought has at last come, although poetic and religious insight reached it ages ago. Not only is it stated by Emerson in "The Problem" that the "temples grew as grows the grass,' and that

> "Out from the heart of Nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old,"

but it is clear now that this truth is in germ in that animism which is the religion of savages the world over. It seems fantastic to regard natural objects as inhabited by spirits, and yet that theory was right in this, that that which reveals itself in the conscious life of man is in all Nature, too. In the course of ages human thought has been purified, organized, and verified. But in justice to its beginnings we may say with the poet that

> "Shy yearnings of the savage,
> Unfolding thought by thought,
> To holy lives are lifted,
> To visions fair are wrought."

The poets, philosophers, and men of science are teaching us the significance of our own life as the

present stage in the unfolding of the great life. We are catching some glimpses of the meaning of the great process.

> "And still the worship deepens,
> And quickens into new,
> As, brightening down the ages,
> God's secret thrilleth through."

This interpretation of Nature, though more thoroughgoing and true than the half-way, partial naturalism now in vogue, will not perhaps increase our mechanical efficiency in the exploitation of Nature's physical resources. Its value lies in the fact that it affords a view of the world which gives nourishment and support to faith, hope, and the life of aspiration. It satisfies the religious longing; for, as the philosopher Paulsen says, "The real essence of every religious belief is the assurance that the true nature of reality reveals itself in that which I love and reverence as the highest and best: it is the certainty that the good and the perfect, towards which the deepest yearning of my will is directed, forms the origin and the goal of all things."

Furthermore, this interpretation is no private fancy. Toward it the clearest and best thought of our time is converging. Thus, Prof. F. J. E. Woodbridge of Columbia University, New York, declares that we must draw the necessary conclusions from the accepted view of the natural origin of our race. He says that "Narrow and straightened naturalism has erred in its estimate of nature. . . . Having learned that Nature works by machinery, it neglected the obvious fact that the machinery exists to support and maintain its product. The future historian will note the neglect and characterize our age as one

strikingly lacking in intelligence. He will note our vast industry, and comment on the fact that, while we made great machines to support and sustain the products of that industry, we could none the less regard Nature as purely mechanical, with no product to exalt or sustain. We have been so afraid of the doctrine of final causes and of assigning deliberate intentions to Nature, that we have forgotten that she has produced, supported, and sustained human civilization. For man is a part of Nature, carried on by her forces to work the works of intelligence. In him she bursts forth into sustaining consciousness of her own evolution, producing in him knowledge of her processes, estimation of her goods, and suspicions of her ultimate significance."

Well may the professor continue, "This is a truth of Nature and not a product of human fancy; and it is a truth fraught with the profoundest emotional import." He who perceives this import has found the way out of "darkest" into an enlightned naturalism; for it is evermore indisputable that man, not in his body only, but in his higher nature, in his religion and spiritual life, is an outgrowth of Nature herself. It is simply a fact, as this thinker says, that man "has grown out of Nature's own stuff and been wrought in her workshop. He is, then, no mere commentator on the world or spectator of it; he is one of its integrations, so to speak, a supreme instance where Nature has measurably evaluated herself. His comments are Nature's self-estimate."

Other scholars might be quoted in support of this position, but what it needs most is simply clear statement. Indeed, this philosophy of enlightened naturalism, which is at the same time humanism, lies

right in the great highway of human thought, and it is to its inspiring, joy-giving, and energy-creating view that we must all eventually come. As we emerge from the depressing conceptions that have so long prevailed, as we begin to comprehend the real significance of the scientific view of man's place in nature, happy trust and sense of kinship with the highest spontaneously return to our hearts. A new poetry and a new music may be expected to appear. One of the first fruits is the exquisite poem by W. C. Gannett: —

> "The Lord is in his Holy Place,
> In all things near and far!
> Shekinah of the snowflake, he,
> And Glory of the star,
> And Secret of the April land
> That stirs the field to flowers,
> Whose little tabernacles rise
> To hold him through the hours."

Lovely as are the images called up by these lines, the naturalism they express is incomplete. Thought cannot stop there. Because man, dowered with intelligence and love, is as natural as snowflake, star, or flower, the poet's logic is flawless and his thought as true as it is beautiful when he goes on to say that

> "God hides his love within the love
> Of those whom we love best;
> The smiles and tones that make our homes
> Are shrines by him possessed:
> He tents within the lonely heart
> And shepherds every thought;
> We find him not by seeking far,—
> We lose him not, unsought."

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

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[No. 258]

I BELIEVE

BY

REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

[No. 258]

I BELIEVE.

BY REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN.

I want to express some of the truth which is vital to me. Our minds are open, we are seeking for new truth. We are ever ready to abandon error. Yet there are certain convictions which can never be outgrown. Let me proclaim them for you now.

With all my heart and with an overwhelming joy I believe in God, the Eternal Love that has brought me into being and given me this wonderful world to live in. I believe in God, the Perfect One, whose purpose no power has ever withstood and whose action has never needed to take the form of miracle. No devil ever, no miracle ever; but always God's creative force working by inevitable processes to an intelligent and beneficent end. In God's love we live and move. Each one is dear to him, and each has a definite career to follow unto the perfect life. God is personal, and we can

have communion with him. From our birth until now he has led us on. To the limits of earth and beyond he will lead us, guard us, inspire us still.

I believe in Man! In man, noblest of the creation of God, standing at the summit of the orderly evolution of the divine thought, and, in spite of all short-comings, capable of all growth. Man is greater than the philosophies, laws, and Bibles he has produced. Man is greater than the best he has yet done, finer than the noblest who have yet lived, loftier than Jesus, who is thus far chief among us: yes, man is greater than has yet been manifested in God's thought concerning him. Man is immortal! I believe that human nature tends toward goodness, that it can be trusted, and that to trust and love it will always respond until at last all souls attain the beautiful life. I believe in Jesus Christ, in the Bible, in religion, in happiness, in progress, in reason, because they are human. I believe in man intensely.

I believe in the present life. I believe that this world of ours is divinely created by orderly processes of evolution as the only possible sphere for

human origination and progress. The world is not a pitfall nor a vale of tears. It is a divinely constituted sphere for moral action and satisfying growth for the soul. It is a great thing to live, a great blessing to have a start in life, and this world provides that start for every soul. Whether for any individual the start be good, bad or indifferent to man's present judgment is of slight moment in an eternal course. The start is the important matter. The living with its high possibilities of moral joy and intelligently earned advance is an indescribable blessing from God bestowed upon every mortal. So I believe in this life as an overflowing treasury of opportunity for myself and for you and for all born into it. Trial does but intensify the moral opportunity. Sin does but accentuate what might have been and what through repentance shall be. Loss and grief do but summon forth the holier depths of the soul's abilities and reveal men as immortals at last; for, happily, this world is not the measure of a man's opportunity and scope.

I believe in the world to come! Far

more intensely than I rejoice in man's existing and stimulating fields for service and growth do I exult in the realms that are not yet displayed to view. With mighty earnestness, with the whole heart's passion, I believe in the life eternal for all souls. The moment before death is never a man's last chance in any of the lasting concerns of the soul. In God's vocabulary there is no such phrase as "last chance," for moral opportunity is of necessity an eternal thing. The gates of death thrown open surely display to every comer undreamed-of wealth of opportunity. Rank upon rank of chances for great deeds will there appear. Rising there before our eager souls will shine unto us diviner calls for strength and advance in us. Sad indeed that sight for all that have wasted instead of treasuring their moral strength,—sad, torturing, but not unto death. For there will be healing also. There will be tenderness. There will be help and divine punishment that redeems. And so in one way or another God will inspire *all* to rise to the grander opportunities of the world to come.

Each generation of men takes its turn at the tangled affairs of earth. Each is like a wave striking its blow at the shores and cliffs, but not a wave destined to fade away into nothing after that blow is delivered. No, we are all part of a grander tide that flows right on forever. Whatever the proportion of our personal success and failure in the present world, we go on and on forever; and in good time we, one and all, find fulfilment to our finer possibilities and the bright day of duty for which we so long have been storing up energy. We shall be able in the brave world to come to live our fullest life. We shall reach our best. Yet for eternity our best will be but a beginning of a larger heaven we are to build, each soul his own architect and builder, each a fellow-worker with God in the issues of life that are too lovely to perish.

These noble beliefs have been, and must continue to be, the mainstay of the moral life. They have no other reason for being. Ceasing to shape character, they cease to be convictions. We preach them for the up-

building of souls. Let us do so with an ever-increasing joy and loyalty.

Let us believe them with heart and mind and strength and soul as Jesus, our leader, did. To this end, and this end alone,

> "Jesus calls us. O'er the tumult
> Of our life's wild, restless sea
> Day by day his sweet voice soundeth,
> Saying, 'Christian, follow me!'"

Day by day he calls. Day by day our wills respond in lives of service based on such beliefs as Jesus held. And day by day over all faithful human endeavor falls the sunlight of God's approval.

[No. 259]

THE CHURCH WHICH LIETH FOURSQUARE

BY

REV. WILLIAM SAFFORD JONES

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE CHURCH WHICH LIETH FOURSQUARE

"On the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. . . . And the city lieth foursquare."—REVELATION 21:13, 16.

THERE is more than one gate into the City of God, the Kingdom of Heaven. If this truth had been keenly realized all through the Christian centuries, there would have been no persecution of heretics, no slaying of martyrs, no record writ in blood and blotted with tears. Catholic would not have burnt Protestant, Puritan would not have harried Quaker and Baptist, orthodox would not have assailed heterodox, Trinitarian would not have been intolerant of Unitarian, nor Unitarian of Trinitarian. The Inquisition would have been only a terrible dream of the diseased imagination of a bigoted ecclesiastic. The iron heel of the Roman system would not have ground to powder the poor men and women who followed Christ too literally to suit the worldly Vatican. Milton would not have been moved to wrathful verse by the bones of slaughtered saints on "the Alpine mountains cold." The Spirituals, who loved the precepts and example of St. Francis of Assisi better than ecclesiastical preferment and conformity, would not have met a cruel death at the hands of a merciless Mother Church. Luther would not have sanctioned the cruel treatment of fanatical

Anabaptists, nor Calvin have consented to the death of Servetus. Thousands of conscientious ministers would not have been forced out of their livings in the Church of England because they could not take an oath of uniformity, and Old England thus made poorer in order to enrich New England. With a wider vision Episcopacy would not have frozen out the warm-hearted Wesleys. With a deeper understanding of the breadth and variety of Christian truth, the great cathedrals of England would have been turned into houses of prayer for the whole nation and not kept as conventicles of worship for a segment of it. If the many-sidedness of religious truth had been emphasized, James Martineau or Stopford Brooke could have been Dean of Westminster just as well as Arthur Penrhyn Stanley. If New England Congregationalism had only recognized the power of the Spirit in the lives of Channing and Parker and Emerson, her seemingly heretical sons, there would have been no schism in the body, no division of brethren into Trinitarians and Unitarians, no long drawn-out controversy. And if the Church of Rome could become truly Catholic, she would not waste her time and strength and injure the real unity of Christendom by driving from her fold some of her noblest priests and profoundest thinkers who are filled with the modern spirit, which in the deepest sense is the present spirit of God.

Let the Church Universal, then, catch the vision of the city which lieth foursquare, with gates on the east and the north and the south and the west; let her give up the notion that the city of God has only one gate through which men and women can pass into the Kingdom of spiritual peace and power; and

heresy trials would cease all over Christendom, ecclesiastical persecution would be a relic of the Dark Ages, justice and sympathy would dictate the policy of every council and presbytery and conference, love would be the motive-power of every ecclesiastical act, moral and religious fruitfulness the test of spiritual vitality. Too long have men seen but one gate, and that in their own corner of the Kingdom of God. Now it is high time that men should open their eyes more widely and behold the many gates through which from age to age the multitudes of truth-seekers pour into the realm of faith. For from every point of the spiritual compass come the worshippers of God and the servants of men, to sit down together in the Kingdom of good-will and brotherhood and peace.

On the east are three gates. The East is the home of Mysticism. The brooding, contemplative spirit, the soul's passionate longing for union with God, all come out of the East. Her symbols are the mighty Pyramids and the musing Sphinx, Thebes and Karnak. The fruitful Nile and the lordly Ganges have ever reminded men of that river of God which is full of water. All the great historic religions are Oriental — Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism. Their founders were Orientals of the Orientals. "In Christ," says a leader of the Brahmo-Somaj, "we see not only the exaltedness of humanity, but also the grandeur of which Asiatic nature is susceptible." The historical Jesus was an Oriental Christ. A few square miles in a little Eastern country are still the Holy Land to the majority of the western world, and think of the blood and treasure poured out by Christian Europe to possess it — in vain. The Star in the East has always guided the

religion of humanity. The Orient cannot perhaps teach anything practical or give anything material to the Occident, but the meditative East can impart to the busy West its sense of the Infinite and Eternal. As the late Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, in his last book on the message of Christianity to the religions of the East, emphasized so strongly, western religion can learn much from eastern religion; for western religion, whether Catholic or Protestant, has become so largely secularized and commercialized that it has well-nigh lost its consciousness of communion with God. In India, that vast empire of which we know so little, the meanest native, according to Dr. Hall, is immersed in the sense of the Infinite. In Him he lives and moves and has his being in a far more literal way than his western brother. The Oriental passion is not for gold or land, but for the Eternal. I do not forget the great mystics of the West, Tauler, Eckhart, Swedenborg, Emerson; but who would dare say that here the "practice of the presence of God" is common? The Church will become a barren spiritual institution if she breeds no mystics. If the Kingdom of God which is being built up in the western world out of the rich and varied services of man for his brother-man, in schools and colleges and hospitals and dispensaries and social settlements, has no gates open toward the east, it will be a kingdom without a king. Close and bar the gates to mysticism, and you will lose a vital force out of your religion. To paraphrase Emerson, "They reckon ill who leave that out."

But the city which lieth foursquare has gates on the north as well as on the east. The North is the home of Rationalism as the East is the home of

Mysticism. The Church must admit Rationalists as quickly as she admits Mystics. "The cool breath of the North" must mingle with the quiet serene atmosphere of the East. The Church cannot dispense with the cold, critical spirit in her pursuit of truth, any more than with the warm glowing spirit in her ardor of devotion. The North has ever looked askance at miracle. It has distrusted the marvellous. It has fought shy of over-much reliance on form. It has opposed supernatural authority. It has had scant respect for ecclesiastical pretensions. It has inspired the love of civil liberty. The North gave us the Germanic reverence for spiritual freedom. The Reformation and Protestantism could have been born nowhere except in the North. Puritanism could not have thriven elsewhere. The East could not have produced a Cromwell or a Milton, any more than she could have produced a Darwin or a Spencer. From the realm of reason in religion came Spinoza and Kant and Hegel and Goethe. Still we look to Holland and Germany for guidance in our historical studies in the field of religion. Our ideas of the nature and composition of the Bible and of the course of Church History have been profoundly modified by the researches of scholars, whose only desire is to know the truth and the whole truth. No other part of the globe, no other section of the Church, could have raised up Harnack, that great prophet of modern Christian truth. When I speak of him I think of hundreds like him who are building up the kingdom of light. They are Rationalists, not in the sense of being destructive secularists, but in the sense of being eager to ground religion in the reason of things, to bring religion into accord with the facts of

science and history. They do not care to have knowledge and faith at swords' points. Rationalism, the gift of the North to the Church Universal, like Mysticism, the gift of the East, must always have an honored place and a useful function in the life of the Church. To-day when reactionary tendencies are setting in, when devout men are fearful of a future without supernatural authority to guide religious thought,—read Father Benson's article on "Catholicism and the Future" in a recent number of the *Atlantic Monthly*—when multitudes are bewildered by inevitable ecclesiastical changes, many cry, "Shut the gates against Reason." On the contrary, the gates must be opened, and Rationalism have free course and be glorified, or the Christian Church will cease to influence the minds of educated men and women.

There are, however, gates on the south as well as on the east and north. The Church Universal, if truly inclusive, must have room for Symbolism as well as for Mysticism and Rationalism. The Latin nations have contributed the arts of painting and sculpture and music to the worship of the Church. The Teutonic peoples, of course, have not been without their great painters and sculptors and musicians, but, owing to the Protestant fear of formalism in religion, they have not contributed so directly to the art of worship. When we think of the Latin Church, however, we think of Raphael and Michael Angelo and Palestrina. We see the glorious colors and the classic figures and hear the inspiring music, which only the Latin, the Italian, genius and temperament could bring forth. These beauties of art, no doubt, allied to gorgeous services, have often been associated

with ecclesiastical corruption and gross superstition. Worship even among these elevating surroundings has often degenerated into mummery. The abuse of Symbolism is formalism, just as the abuse of Mysticism is fatalism, and of Rationalism scepticism. With our Puritan and Individualist and Quaker inheritance, we naturally shrink from elaboration of worship, from over-emphasis upon externals. But there is no merit in bareness of worship in itself. It does not necessarily follow that where bald simplicity in worship is there the heart is. It may be far away. This beautiful church, in which we are privileged to worship, ought to teach us the value of art as an aid to worship. Every year, as life in our homes and schools becomes more refined and artistic, the demand everywhere to make the services of the churches richer and more dignified becomes more and more insistent. The drift in all the churches, as I see it, is not toward a rigid formalism, but toward a more expressive symbolism. We are in no danger of going over to Rome, of coming under the spell of the Papacy or of Episcopacy, because we make a wise use of the great days and festivals of the Church. The modern spirit has too firm a hold on us for us to surrender to superstition, but we must keep the gates open to Symbolism, the gift of the South to the Universal Church. Mysticism and Rationalism, separately or together, are not enough. To make common worship beautiful and inspiring we must have Symbolism, albeit a restrained Symbolism, shorn of excesses.

But there are also gates on the west of the city which lieth foursquare. In the West, more especially in this America of ours, religion is humanitarian in

tone and temper. In this part of the world Mysticism and Rationalism and Symbolism are subordinated to Humanitarianism. Here the service of God shows itself more through the service of man than through any other manifestation. Enthusiasm for humanity, which was a marked characteristic of early Christianity, in striking contrast to the indifference to humanity in the Roman Empire, is the prevailing form of twentieth century American Christianity. Faith is eminently practical. It is concerned primarily with the needs of men's bodies. After those have been satisfied it deals, if it has time, with the needs of their souls. In this respect it is in harmony with the General Epistle of James: "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself." And Western Christianity is also in hearty accord with the sentiment of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where those who have given meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty and taken in strangers and clothed the naked and visited the sick and imprisoned are blessed by the Son of Man, who declares, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

In all ecclesiastical circles here in America, in every kind of church, Catholic or Evangelical or Liberal, the humanitarian note is sounded. Many widely differing sects in actual practice accept the prophet Micah's definition of religion, to do justly, to

love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. The West brings to the shrine of Universal Religion the passion for human service. At times such service may seem to some to turn the Church into a purely secular movement, without any religious motive. In her eagerness to help, the Church may divest herself of her ecclesiastical habit, but at heart she is soundly religious. For, after all, it is not the name or the form or the ritual word that counts above everything, but simply following the Lord of Love.

Nevertheless, to paraphrase St. Paul: "The body is not one member, but many. If the Rationalist shall say, Because I am not the Mystic, I am not of the body; he is not, therefore, not of the body. And if the Humanitarian shall say, Because I am not the Symbolist, I am not of the body; he is not, therefore, not of the body. If the whole body were Mysticism, where were Rationalism? If the whole were Symbolism, where were Humanitarianism? But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the Mystic cannot say to the Rationalist, I have no need of thee: or again the Symbolist to the Humanitarian, I have no need of you."

For in this inclusive Christian body, this comprehensive Church of God, this city which lieth foursquare, there are the gates of Mysticism on the East and of Rationalism on the North and of Symbolism on the South and of Humanitarianism on the West.

And mark that in this holy city the only ground of exclusion is ethical, not theological. The glory and the honor of the nations far and wide shall be

brought into it, but anything unclean, morally, socially, politically, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie, in his home or business or public office, shall no wise enter into it. Many gates, but through each runs the strait and narrow way of righteousness and justice.

It is for these great truths that our Unitarian body stands,— a comprehensive Christian Church, where Mystics and Rationalists and Symbolists and Humanitarians will all have plenty of room and fair play, and an ethical test in religion. It is for the spreading of this broadening conception of the Church Universal, the Holy Catholic Church, a church greater than Greek Catholic or Roman Catholic or Anglican Catholic or Protestant sect, that the American Unitiarian Association exists. In our own ranks we have these four types of religious thought and feeling, and it would be the height of folly to drive any one of them from our midst. Each needs the others to save it from narrowness. Recognizing this, let us work more vigorously than ever to leaven the whole lump, the Church Universal, with this inspiring idea of an inclusive church. Let us be glad of the privilege and the opportunity, presented to us once a year, of helping a great missionary body like our American Unitarian Association, which stands squarely for these spiritual ideals of a truly Broad Church.

For multitudes in the churches of America are still enamored of the idea that there can be only one gate into the City of God, and that the gate in their own corner of the Kingdom of Heaven; thousands are still under the spell of the notion that the test of Christian discipleship is not ethical and vital, but theological and ecclesiastical; therefore, the supreme

need of an Association of Free Christian Churches which shall hold up before rival sects the ideal of the city which lieth foursquare; therefore, the pressing need of strengthening and enriching the resources of this Association for the diffusion of pure Christianity throughout America.

Let us dedicate ourselves anew, with fresh courage and greater zeal, to the never-ending work of building this Church Universal, the Broad Church, the Deep Church, the Church of Reason, the Church of Faith, the church which lieth foursquare, made up of all seekers after the Divine Light and Life, of all who are doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with their God.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of Its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; price, $1.50 *net;* **postage, 18 cents additional.**

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method. without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of. Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post Office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

IMMORTALITY, and Other Essays

By Charles Carroll Everett

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 280; price, $1.20 *net;* postage, 11 cents.

THE late Dean of the Harvard Divinity School has given us many scholarly essays on religious and philosophical subjects. Dr. Everett's penetrating and analytical mind, with his ideas expressed in clear and simple yet finished style, lends to all his writings an interest and charm not always associated with the topics discussed. The two previous volumes of his essays have omitted considerable excellent material worthy of a more permanent form of preservation than the periodicals in which it appeared, and it is from this source that the following essays have been chosen for the contents of the present volume: "Immortality," "The Known and the Unknowable in Religion," "Mysticism," "The Gain of History," "The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith," "Joseph Priestley," "The Philosophy of the Sublime," "Spencer's Reconciliation of Science and Religion."

THE SPARK IN THE CLOD

OR, THE EFFECT OF EVOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

By J. T. Sunderland

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2 inches; pages, 230; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

A STUDY of the larger and more worthy conception of religion that is coming to the world as the result of evolution. The book meets the wants of that very large number of people who find themselves compelled to believe in the truth of the scientific doctrine of evolution, but who are anxiously asking the question, Does it not disturb the foundations of Christianity? There are chapters on the Evolution of the World, of Man, of Religion; Pain and Evil, Immortality, the Bible, Jesus, and Christianity in the light of Evolution. The effect of modern knowledge of evolutionary processes upon our intellectual, moral, and religious conceptions is carefully presented and explained. Rational application of accepted facts of science is made to the world of religious ideas, and the necessary modification in the old conception of things is clearly pointed out.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT **MAINTAINS** (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT **PUBLISHES** (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT **AIDS** (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT **CO-OPERATES** with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT **ADMINISTERS** endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT **UNITES** the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 260]

CHRIST THE UNDERSTANDING FRIEND

BY

REV. CHARLES EDWARDS PARK

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

American Unitarian Association

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CHRIST, THE UNDERSTANDING FRIEND

"But he knew their thoughts."—LUKE 6: 8.

FOR two thousand years, almost, the Christian Church has been engaged in the effort to exactly define her relations towards Jesus Christ, and to describe, in a satisfactory manner, his nature. This has been an ever-present task, an unfailing intellectual resource, one to which the Church has turned whenever more pressing questions of the moment would permit, and one which she has always left as far from final solution as ever. It does not come amiss, therefore, to offer suggestions as to the nature and function of Christ, and the Church's relations to Christ, for such suggestions are always in order.

Let us consider, then, the suggestion that the most profitable as well as the most rational character which can be attributed to Christ is the character of an understanding friend. Christ the Friend means more to Christians than Christ in any other capacity. And so I have ventured to choose for my text this phrase from Luke, "But he knew their thoughts."

It is exceedingly difficult for the human mind to think in abstract terms. John Fiske, and a number of other men, have deliberately gone on record as saying something even more uncomplimentary than this — for they declare that careful and sustained thinking of any kind, in any terms, abstract or con-

crete, is the hardest work that people find to do. Perhaps it is. We may content ourselves this morning with a partial acquiescence in that statement. It is exceedingly difficult for the human mind to think for very long in abstract terms. Most, if not all, our abstract thinking is done with the aid of concrete symbols or pictures or mental images. If we could see each other's thoughts we should probably see a succession of pictures — a succession of definite situations, peopled with definite and recognizable faces and figures, and vocal with definite words, definite laughter or tears or prayers or curses. For that is the easy and the common way to think — in the terms and values of the concrete. We apprehend eternal truth in its concrete manifestations, or not at all. The assertion that two and two equal four, as a pure metaphysical abstraction, has no meaning for us. In fact, we cannot conceive of the abstract property of duality. We cannot think of two — just *two* — just the abstract property *two*. The mind at once asks the question, two what? Two chairs, or two men, or two horses, or two ships, or two dollars, or even two little marks on a piece of paper. The mind at once grasps at a concrete symbol or manifestation of that abstract property of duality, and having formulated the instantaneous concrete picture, the mind readily assents to the abstract statement that two and two are four — two men and two men are four men. One can visualize them. That is the easy and the common way to think — by painting for ourselves a succession of concrete pictures.

For the same reason the abstract thought of deity, the abstract thought of God, is an exceedingly diffi-

cult thought to grasp — and even when the mind has once made the great effort to at least approximately grasp that abstract thought of deity, it immediately slips back to earth again amidst the familiar shapes and scenes of the concrete. It is hard to grasp the abstract thought of God, and still harder to retain it when once grasped. The mind at once seeks the assistance of a symbol, a concrete manifestation of abstract deity, a visible image or picture. That craving for the concrete manifestation of God is the basis of idolatry, and idolatry is one of the most touching, one of the most human and childlike and earnest efforts to reach God that the world can find in all its history.

When the Hindoo mother takes a little cup of melted butter and a wreath of jasmine flowers in one hand, and her sick baby on her other arm, and enters the temple in which there squats the "grinning idol made of mud," and lays the butter and the flowers at his feet and holds out the baby in her outstretched arms, the dogmatic-minded missionary is filled with wrath, but the man of psychological insight is moved to tears. In her dumb and groping way, she is trying to reach her God. Her heart is full of prayer as pure and earnest as ever your enlightened lips have uttered, or mine, and she is speaking it in the only language she knows. She is not worshipping the grinning idol — she is worshipping the unsearchable and the intangible God who takes care of little babies — the God for whom the idol stands; of whom the idol is but a concrete symbol.

In his famous missionary hymn Bishop Reginald Heber says —"the heathen in his blindness bows

down to wood and stone." The good Bishop is wrong — the heathen is not bowing down to wood and stone — he is bowing down to the awful thought of God, which is merely symbolized for him, merely objectified to his groping intelligence by the wood and stone. And when it comes to blindness, one cannot help wondering which after all is really the blinder — the heathen or the Bishop. The heathen is only giving us another illustration of our proposition — that it is almost impossible to formulate the conception of purely abstract deity, but that the easy and the common way to think of God is for us to think of a concrete manifestation of God. Until we have attained unto those distant, lofty, cloud-wrapped summits of intellectual achievement, where the mind lays aside all its earth-bound imagery, and discards its concrete symbols, and moves in direct and familiar intercourse with pure abstractions, our human thinking of God amounts simply to an idolatry of varying forms and degrees.

Until we have reached that distant spiritual realm which we may call the land of pure mysticism, where there is given unto our souls what the Old Testament calls the "direct vision," where there are no intermediary conceptions needed, but where the mind of man thinks God and knows God and apprehends God by a consciousness to which the abstract is palpable and which leaps immediately to the divine object of its search, and knows him directly — until we reach that land of pure mysticism where dwells Abraham the friend of God, and Enoch who walked with God, and little Samuel who heard in his very soul the accents of the divine voice, and every rapt and radiant spirit whose search for God has been re-

warded by an immediate and personal apprehension of the divine — until we reach that blessed future, we must be content to see as through a glass darkly, and the glass in which we are fain to find these abstract verities reflected is none other than idolatry in one form or another. The road to the land of pure mysticism is dotted with intellectual stations, intellectual rest-houses, for all the world like the caravansaries at regular intervals on a desert highway. They are our compromises, the shrines of our diminishing idolatry. We put up in one for the night. In the morning we pay our score, and trudge along to the next. Please do not be afraid of that term "idolatry." It is covered with a very undeserved odium. In so far as Bishop Heber was obliged to symbolize to himself the wondrous thought of God in the terms of a concrete, dogmatic, logically impossible Christ, a definite member of a definite trinity,— he was psychologically just as much an idolater as the heathen who bows down to wood and stone. And in so far as I am obliged to reach my thought of God through my apprehension of definite traits of goodness, through my admiration of definite heroes, through my love of concrete personalities who possessed undeniable traits of Godlikeness, in so far as I am obliged to formulate my conception of God by formulating a composite picture of all that is best and holiest and sweetest and purest in the concrete world and the concrete life about me, to that extent, I, too, am an idolater.

We are all on this pilgrimage to the land of the direct consciousness of God. Each night we are fain to lodge in one or the other of these rest-houses, intellectual compromises, caravansaries, shrines of our idol-

atry, wherewith the highway is dotted. It is right and proper that we do so. The element of wrong, of danger, comes in only when we reach a caravansary that strikes us as being especially comfortable, and determine to make it our permanent abode. The sinfulness of idolatry becomes a reality only when we look upon it, not as a transitional, but as a permanent condition. As soon as we reach a wayside shrine whose invitation to rest we cannot refuse, and in whose comfortable security we are content to pass the remainder of our allotted days, forgetting our pilgrimage towards the soul's true heaven, that moment we are idolaters in the vicious and the reprehensible sense of the word. And by the way, that form of idolatry is a sin which is committed about as often by Christians as by heathens. But to the pilgrim who presses ever on upon his quest — who, as our hymn has it, "nightly pitches his moving tent a day's march nearer home," who lodges night after night in these successive shrines, each day pushing on to the next one where the symbol is a little bit more transparent and the substance a little bit more real, where the concrete manifestation of God is a little bit less necessary, and the direct consciousness of God a little bit clearer and stronger — to such a pilgrim this pathway of diminishing idolatry is but an educational process, a vanishing medium, which graduates him at the last into that land of the direct vision where God is immediately known of the soul, and where he sees even as he is seen.

That is the quest, the spiritual pilgrimage upon which we are one and all engaged — that journey from the land of sense-bound perceptions, of material forms and substance, to the land of spiritual insight,

the land of spiritual realities and the direct consciousness of God. In other words, we are all mystics in the making, endeavoring to liberate ourselves from the thraldom of bodily limitations, and endeavoring to cultivate the faculties and senses of the soul to such a degree of efficiency that we shall be able to know God, to apprehend God, to be conscious of the divine directly and immediately without the aid of idolatrous imageries or concrete manifestations. That is a very wonderful power. To us in our present condition it seems full of mystery. There have been those who have possessed it. There is the story of St. Genevieve, whose soul was so immediately and intimately conscious of the presence of her Crucified Christ, and whose spirit entered so fully into a direct sympathetic awareness or union with Christ that she received the stigmata: that is to say, she awoke one morning to find that there were nail-prints in her hands and feet and a spear wound in her side, as though she herself had been crucified. Her spiritual sympathy and participation with Christ had been so vivid and so perfect that the experience had been attended by a physical reaction, and had left upon her body the visible tokens of the closeness of her spiritual union with Christ. And we are told that St. Francis had precisely the same experience.

To be sure these stories strike us as being unwholesomely fantastic. We say they could not be true of persons who were entirely sane. The poor fisherman of the Maine coast ballasts his fishing sloop with gravel. We say with entire truth that if St. Genevieve and St. Francis had possessed souls that were properly ballasted with the earth and gravel of practical cares and matter-of-fact duties they would never

have passed through such fantastic experiences. Yet we cannot dismiss the whole subject in any such way as that. There is a world of matter, and there is a world of spirit, and a habitation properly divided between those two realms is man's normal and ideal condition. There is a world of tangible facts and sensuous occasions, the details of which are palpable to our bodily senses. There is also a God who is spirit — and who may be directly found only by those who seek him in spirit and in truth. And man has not fulfilled the reach of his manhood until he can not only dwell in this visible and sensuous world and discharge its visible and sensuous obligations, but can also dwell in the spiritual world and apprehend, by the grasp of his own soul, the invisible spirit of God who lives and moves about him and through him. That, then, is man's quest — to be able to inhabit both estates of this wonderful world: to be faithfully practical, and at the same time to add unto his practicality its saving crown of true mysticism: to spend upon earth his share of days of ceaseless labor and nights devoid of ease, and at the same time to be able to hear in his soul the music of wonderful melodies. To busy himself with warp and shuttle over the fabric of earthly ambitions and achievements, and yet to be able to trace through that web, back of that web of earthly things, more and more clearly as the years go by, the fair outlines of a divine purpose, and the ineffable radiance of a majestic presence; until at the last the web grows thin and sere and God himself comes through directly and immediately and possesses his soul: that is our quest — our pilgrimage. It is not an easy one. It is beset with difficulties

and obstacles. For some natures it is a great deal harder than for others. But we may see, in the strange new attention which the world of thought is paying to-day to just these matters of the spirit, that men and women are beginning to acknowledge the reality and the importance of that side of life. We may detect a proof of their new interest, in these various new systems of so-called mysticism which have come into existence within the past few years, and by mysticism we may mean, perhaps, the attempt to cultivate the ability to know God directly, and without the aid of concrete manifestations or symbols, the ability to throw away the last vestiges of our idolatry and to be immediately aware, through the newly-developed senses of the soul, of the presence and nature of God. There is much of that mysticism in our life to-day. Sermons are preached and books are written about it, and courses are given in seminaries, and schools of mystics are being formed.

For example, there are those mystics who declare that the human soul *would* know God naturally and spontaneously if it were not that the soul is so stuffed full of the accumulated rubbish of experience that its knowledge of God is tainted and discolored. As though a soul were a well in which there would naturally be clean, sweet water, except that it is so filled with mosses and ferns and dead leaves and sediment that the waters are hopelessly tainted. Therefore, say these mystics, the thing to do is to divest your soul of all that collection of principles, and fears, and scruples, and prejudices, and habits which have accumulated through years of experience and inheritance — pump your well dry and then

clean out all its deposit of moss and weed and dead leaves and sediment, and then let the sweet water seep in and fill it. Empty your soul of all custom, usage, habit and convention — good and bad alike — get it clean and empty and receptive, and the living waters of God-consciousness will bubble up sweet and pure and fresh, and fill it full of the knowledge of God. That is one form of modern mysticism — one which seems beautifully adequate and helpful to a certain class of people.

Then there are those other mystics of our day who start in by apparently begging the question — and who declare that the conception of God is far too abstract, too distant and unreal to be ever grasped by the human soul, and that even if it were possible to grasp that conception, the soul would never take any comfort in it because abstract deity is too bloodless, too cold and impersonal to enlist or to deserve the affection of the human heart. They do not deny God, but God fails to interest them. They know he exists somewhere, but they assert that they know nothing and care little about God. So instead of God they create for themselves a sort of demi-god which they call the Eternal Christ, whose nature is divine enough to put him on terms of familiarity with God, and at the same time human enough to enlist and to retain the ardent affection and allegiance of human beings. This Eternal Christ, if you please, is not to be confused with Jesus of Nazareth. He existed before Jesus of Nazareth, he dwelt for a few months in Jesus of Nazareth, and he exists now and ever independent of Jesus of Nazareth. He is the eternal mediator between man and God.

To him man pours out his offerings of love and hope and high resolve, his prayer and communion, and he in turn passes on those offerings to God. Just how he passes them on man does not know, and does not much care, but he passes them on as is fitting; and the important thing is to see that there are these offerings forthcoming from man to the Eternal Christ.

The Red-skin on his western reserve has little if any knowledge of the privileges and obligations of a democratic form of government. So the President appoints an agent who shall go and live upon the reservation and be the go-between for the Red-skin and the government. The Eternal Christ is a sort of agent which an unknowable God has set in charge of a world full of simple-minded human beings. That is a form of mysticism — personal ignorance of God, but approach to God through a mediating Christ — which is very common amongst our so-called liberal-orthodox brethren, and which in all probability is destined to play a large part in the theology of the immediate future. It does not seem to trouble them that this is a very un-Christlike sort of a Christianity. There was nothing so foreign to the mind of Christ as the thought that he needed a mediator in order to approach God. Jesus and his Heavenly Father were inseparable. It would have been impossible to get a mediator between them. There was no room. And if we read the gospels aright, that is the kind of religion he strove to teach us and leave behind for us; and as we look at it, that kind of a religion, the religion that gives you and me something of Christ's own immediate first-

hand awareness of the Heavenly Father, is the only kind of a religion that deserves the name of Christianity.

But however that may be, here, in a very crude way, are two forms of modern mysticism. There are doubtless many others. We are conscious, in hearing them, of a sense of bewilderment and discouragement. If in order to finish our pilgrimage and find our God it is necessary to be or to do or to believe such extraordinary things as are here suggested, truly we might almost just as well give it up. There is too much of Martha, cumbered with cares, in our composition. We are too practically minded. We cannot soar to these heights, but are so fashioned that we must plod and creep earth-wise upon the ground. Our blood is very red and lustful. Our temptations are powerful. Our sins are very real. Our moral conventions, habits and scruples and principles are very useful. We cannot afford to give them up. And the Eternal Christ is a thought if anything a little harder for us to come at than the thought of Abstract Deity. The upshot of it all is that we were never intended to be mystics, and so suppose we change the subject. Perhaps we are this minute cogitating some such conclusion as that in our minds. And the funny part of it all is, that precisely as we are telling ourselves that we are not fit to be mystics at all, we are making ourselves amenable to the sweetest, oldest, tenderest, most effective mysticism of all — which is the mysticism of ordinary friendship and helpful, understanding sympathy.

Christ, the eternal demi-god, may hold slight attraction for us. Christ, the perfect man, may cause

us a mild thrill of wonder and admiration. But Jesus of Nazareth, whose blood was red and lustful, whose temptations were powerful, to whom sins were very real, whose moral habits and scruples were a strong and indispensable safeguard, Jesus of Nazareth, who bore upon his shoulders the harness and the burden of mortal living even as we are bearing it to-day,— something inside of us melts down at the very mention of his name, and we feel at once our fellowship with him; a fellowship of earthly occasions and human interests, a fellowship of hopes and disappointments, of laughter and tears, of human weakness and of human strength. We feel that in spite of two thousand years and ten thousand miles, the life we are trying to live is, in its essentials, very much the same proposition as the life that he tried to live, and that his immortal successes are possible for us. Best of all, we feel the warmth of his sympathy, the glow of his brotherly love in our hearts. We know he understood the folk about him; he shared their life and their point of view. He anticipated their emotions. As our text has it, he knew their thoughts; and something tells us that he knows ours — that our many difficulties and perplexities, our many hopes and fears and disappointments are well understood by him. He is our understanding friend.

And so we fare along our earthly pilgrimage in the sweet and humble mysticism of an ordinary human companionship. We know that he has trodden this very path before us, and trembled at these same dangers, and labored wearily through these same difficulties, and triumphed over these same foes. It is as though here and there we could

see the very print of his sandal on the ground. That sense of going a journey that someone else, a well beloved friend, has made before us and made successfully,— that is all the mysticism we may enjoy and that after all is all we require. The thought of him is help and strength and companionship and cheer. It would be a lonesome trail and a heavy burden without him. He is our understanding friend. He knows our thoughts — and the mere fact that he knows is a precious comfort. And so the mystic may invite us to try our spirit's wings and rise with him to a mystical adoration of an Eternal Christ, ingeniously contrived, who will intercede for us with God. But we can only answer — Thank you, good friend, thank you. Our spirits have no wings. Go your wondrous way in peace. We are but practical folk, and we are trudging along our pilgrim path with a friend of ours from Galilee, who understands us, and whom we very dearly love. And with his all-sufficing guidance and friendship we shall endeavor to bear our burden quietly and in man-fashion, helping whenever we can, laughing whenever we can, never complaining, picking ourselves up when we fall, never giving way to fright or bitterness, but praying as often as the words will come. And who knows, perhaps some day that Heavenly Father who was so real to our friend from Galilee will suddenly reveal himself to us, and will flood our hearts with the brightness and the joy of his indwelling presence.

[No. 261]

A MODERN VIEW OF RETRIBUTION

BY

REV. GEORGE BATCHELOR, D.D.

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

A MODERN VIEW OF RETRIBUTION

Now are they many members, yet but one body. . . . For whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.— 1 Cor. xii, 20, 26.

MANY people to-day are stumbling over a difficulty which they find in the doubt whether anything like human justice is to be seen in the fortunes of human beings under the divine government. A very brief reference to the doctrine of retribution as held in the Christian Church will bring us naturally to the consideration of the difficulty and the doubt.

In the earliest days of civilization men had worked out the theory that conduct always controlled condition, so that, knowing what a man suffered and what he enjoyed, what he was might be known. So much sin, so much misery, so much obedience, so much happiness,— no more, no less exactly.

That is the statement now called in question. But the question is not new, and the modern doubt is not new. In the book of Job in opposition to this theory the statement was made with great emphasis that no one could tell anything concerning the real merit of a man by noting the things which happened to him in the outer world. The author of the book of Job reduces the question to this: Is a healthy, fortunate, pleasure-taking rich man always good, and is his good fortune the proof of it? and, Is an invalid, poor, unfortunate, and sorrowful, always bad, and

is his misery the proof of it? To these questions Job answered, No. The friends of Job said, Yes; and you are secretly a bad man, or you would not suffer so.

From that day to this it has puzzled the wisest men to reconcile the evident facts of experience with our human sense of justice and with the belief that justice has been, and is, the most conspicuous element in the government under which we live.

For many centuries the Christian Church frankly gave up the endeavor to trace the course of divine justice in the fortunes of individual men and women in this life. This world was admitted to be in a state of confusion caused by the fall of man. Here justice was not done except on some broad lines. Penalties and rewards were reserved for another world. There, not here, would be acquittal and reward or condemnation and penalty.

This life being a state of trial and probation, men, it was said, were allowed for a time to do as they pleased, and even to prosper in their wrong-doing, that they might fairly commit themselves to the good or evil choice. Then, having transferred the scene of retribution to another world, it became necessary to say that, when one passes the gate of death, he passes to his irrevocable destiny, to bliss eternal, or to woe everlasting. The doctrine was well thought out. It fitted the facts of experience. It satisfied both the reason and the conscience, because it furnished an explanation of the seeming chaos of human life upon this earth.

But there came a time when the tender conscience of the world rebelled against the doctrine of eternal punishment. The doctrine had once removed diffi-

culties. It now became itself the huge, insurmountable obstacle to faith in the justice of God.

Simultaneously with this revulsion of feeling came the modern scientific proclamation of universal law and the affirmation that effects follow causes without reference to moral character. This assertion being made, the Old World problem rolled back upon the intellect of this generation, and the doubt again arose whether the fortunes of men can be explained in such a way as to illustrate the impartial justice of God. For the conviction is strong that the good man should be the fortunate man. Now what has troubled the intellect and the heart of so many generations one cannot hope to dispose of in one discourse. But, together with a new difficulty, there always comes a new explanation, and the statement now made possible does reduce the difficulty, does tend to satisfy the reason, to stimulate the conscience, and to give consolation to those who unjustly suffer wrong. It is to one item only of that explanation that I ask your attention.

Our difficulty comes when we attempt to make our human sense of justice and our practice of it explain the government of the universe. In all ages and all nations it has been asserted that each man must by his fellows be held responsible for his own conduct, and that by them he must be treated accordingly. The primary law of natural justice is that the fortunes of each individual are exactly to be determined by the consequences of his own action, so that what he gets he deserves, and what he deserves he gets,— no more, no less. That is human justice. Upon that principle all legislation proceeds, upon that principle all institutions of justice are founded.

Let us now attempt to apply this law to life, and see where it holds good and where it fails to explain the facts of experience.

First in a general way it does apply: —

In the Grecian Pantheon no goddess was more sublime and terrible than that one called Nemesis. The function of this goddess was to attach the proper consequences to all human action, and to preserve a just equilibrium in the affairs of men. Especially was it her duty to see to it that evil doers who were proud, confident, haughty, and successful should some day be confronted with the proper consequences of their own deeds. She might delay her coming; she might be intent on other errands; she might be choosing her time to make her stroke more evident and terrible, but somewhere Nemesis was abroad. At any moment might be heard the noise of her celestial chariot wheels, and woe to him whose conscience failed him when that chariot stopped at his door.

This was no fiction of the Greek imagination. It was the personification of observed experience. What the ancient Greek saw, we see. To take an example: A man begins life with good opportunity and fine powers. He determines to work, to get, to enjoy. He determines to make all things serve his selfish purpose and minister to his selfish pleasure. He makes friends that he may use them. He lays prudent plans. He is skillful, watchful, cunning, successful. He serves himself, he gets for himself, he makes himself the principal object of his achievement, and then comes Nemesis. What he asks for he gets, and he gets nothing more. Every one of you can name some one who may serve to illustrate.

Some strong, eager, selfish, unscrupulous man, who has carried out his plans and gained the treasure he sought, and is now left to enjoy it alone. He has succeeded, but his heart is a void and his life a ruin.

But he may not succeed. A lawyer in Washington tells me that the saddest aspect of life in that city is to be seen in the fortunes of that stream of brilliant and ambitious young men who come there and go steadily down to social ruin and financial disaster, because they attempt to live as if the moral law were not in force in that city. This remark he made, not as a moralist, but as a successful man of business, noting for a quarter of a century the lamentable fate of the youth who in that city perish and leave no record.

But we need not multiply illustrations. Who is there whose memory and conscience cannot trace the good and the evil in his present life back to events in the past? Who is there who does not sometimes in the obstacles which now impede his progress, in his failures and distresses, recognize the slowly growing results of the carelessness, the folly, or the sin of his youth, or who does not sometimes with surprise and gratitude, in present blessings, recognize the result of half-forgotten good deeds or endeavors in the past of his life?

It takes many years for tendencies to complete and declare themselves. But no one fact of human experience is more certain than that the consequences of one's good and evil deeds do fall upon himself.

But — and here comes the difficulty and the doubt — it is equally certain that upon us fall not only the consequences of our own actions, but also that we

enjoy and we suffer that which is caused by the conduct or misconduct of other men and women.

We cannot say truly that what we deserve we get and what we get we deserve, no more, no less. We cannot say that our fortunes are exactly determined by the consequences of our own actions, for they are also determined by the actions of other men.

To give one instance out of a thousand. A jovial, unscrupulous libertine, who never has a physical pang and does not know the meaning of an accusing conscience, may inflict life-long misery upon his father and mother, his wife and children, upon the men who trust him and the women who love him. He may excite affections which he does not believe in, draw out tenderness which he does not value, and be the cause of anxieties which excite his contempt. Because he lacks imagination and sympathy he may be indifferent to the ruin he causes and unconscious of the suffering he inflicts, and may gain all the pleasures of sin, leaving the evil consequences to mar the lives of better men and women.

Where, then, is the law of retribution? We lose the clew at this point, but we find it again in the larger perception that God treats us not only as individuals, but also as members of the human family, which he treats as if it were what it is, one organism. In the wholeness of things, and not in any individual case, we shall find our answer.

Our larger affirmation, then, must be that humanity is responsible for the conduct of humanity. The consequences of human action fall somewhere in human life. The innocent suffer because sinful men do wrong. The wise are afflicted because the ignorant and the foolish commit follies. The strong

carry heavy burdens laid upon them by the incapacity of the weak. For whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or, one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. That which Paul stated concerning the Church is also true of the human race.

What shall we say of such a law? Where is its justice? If we look patiently enough, we shall see that this law is the basis of the universal civilization; that without it the human race would fall apart; the wise and good would hasten on their way, leaving the world behind; the successful and the selfish would monopolize the good things of life, and the gulf would widen constantly between the two extremes of human condition.

As plainly as events can speak, God declares to us that this earth is intended for no one favored class of human beings, but is the inheritance of the race, and that there shall be no perfect enjoyment of its bounty and beauty until all men are safe. It is possible in this life for one to attain to immeasurable heights of wisdom and virtue. It is not possible for any one in this life to attain to the perfect and exclusive enjoyment of the felicity which justly accompanies such attainment, and that is the meaning of that cross on Mt. Calvary. Just as the wise and the good begin to have a glimpse of the possible paradise they might make for themselves, and just as they attempt to isolate themselves with their goodness and refinement, there may come some awful catastrophe bursting in from that outer darkness of disorder which they would gladly shut out and forget. We build our houses to invite the sunshine and the untainted air, we obey every law of health and

keep every commandment in the decalogue, we train ourselves to such sensibility that we avoid with disgust the habitations of the poor, where life goes on in wretchedness or goes out in misery; we regard with loathing and horror the dens of iniquity where human life becomes the spoil of the tempter and sin reaps its awful harvest of youth and strength and beauty; we seek the good and hate the evil. But yet, because the world is our home and its inhabitants our brethren, we must share their fortunes. The air is a common carrier. It takes the freight man puts into it, whether of health or disease, and brings it into our chambers while we sleep.

Our social and moral atmosphere is even more pervasive, and none the less the bearer of bane and blessing because it evades our senses. The moral infection which we strive to forget presses upon us in every institution of society. We are taxed for the ruin it causes. Life is made unsafe and filled with fears for the evil it works in government. It creeps into the news. It pollutes literature. It is borne on the invisible waves of popular feeling. It works in social life, and the tragedies it causes may involve the noblest lives.

Regard it as we may, the law is clear. Not only is every man responsible for himself, but also all men are held responsible for the conduct and well being of all other men.

As to this we have no choice, but there are three ways in which we may live under this law.

We may be unconscious of the source of our miseries, and therefore struggle blindly on, taking as best we may the evil and the good, but seeing neither the reason for the good nor the antidote for the

evil. But that condition is beneath the dignity of a man.

Second. We may be the conscious but unwilling victims of the process by which the world is educated and humanity consolidated. We may see clearly the source of our various troubles and cry out against the injustice which mars our lives and defeats our plans. But, so doing, we fight against the nature of things.

He who makes the attempt will fail, and he ought to fail. For consider, who is the man who would emancipate himself from the burden of the common lot? Whence came his strength, his skill, his social rank, his cultivated powers, his fine sensibility, his superiority to the multitude whose burdens he refuses to bear? There is not one of us to-day in whom there is to be noted any excellence of character or culture which distinguishes us from the savage who does not owe that excellence to the labors, the devotion, the suffering, the unstinted bounty of the generations that have gone before us. Literally is it true, we have not a single common blessing which has not been purchased with the blood and tears freely shed for us by those who have gone before us.

There is left then a third way, the only way for magnanimous souls. We may become the conscious and willing agents of this method of interpreting to man the will of God.

When it becomes clear to us that we cannot escape the fate of our brethren, but that health, life, social virtue, good government, civilization itself, are at the mercy of the lowest elements of human life, whether their home is in the back streets of a wicked

city or in the swamps of Africa or the jungles of Ceylon, then there comes a new motive for humanitarian activity which will surely grow, rising from the low instinct of self-protection through all the ranks of good endeavor, until the civilization of the world will bring all its powers to bear upon the destruction of all that destroys and the growth of all that strengthens human life.

We have dealt with the problem only as it comes into view in this life. We may believe that the law will work everywhere and always. My orthodox friend thinks he can go to heaven, although I go to perdition. But not so. He can never find a heaven of absolute security so long as any soul suffers violence.

The doctrine of the vicarious atonement has become a burden to the reason and conscience of those who hold it, because it is held to be exceptional and peculiar. But, giving it a natural and universal interpretation, it becomes an inspiration and a source of consolation. Because of the nobility of his nature Jesus must suffer. Because of the clearness and breadth of his vision he must share the burdens of the race. That which was true here on this earth would have been true anywhere. He could not have been born into any world where he would not have sought out and shared its evil fortunes. In the life to come there can be no hell so deep and dark that he will not seek out and share its misery until death and hell are swallowed up in victory. In spite of churches and councils this is the essential meaning and spirit of Christianity, and always has been. It is the meaning and spirit of all good things in common life. It gives to every nation its heroes, its

liberators, and saviors. It is the secret of benevolence and the perennial source of sympathy and love. We are many members, but one body. When we accept that statement, the seeming injustice of our lot is removed, and we gladly assume our proper share of the destiny which humanity is working out for itself in accordance with the wisdom and love of the eternal.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston.

American Unitarian Association

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IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

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THE LAYMAN AND THE CHURCH

BY

SALEM HYDE

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS

SALVATION BY CHARACTER

THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND

ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE LAYMAN AND THE CHURCH *

THE problems before the conscientious minister presumably are, and the questions he is most likely to ask himself are: "How am I to make my people see what the church really means? What the church has for each one individually? What of consecration to personal effort? How can I make the way of duty plain? How can I add moral and spiritual energy to the lives of these average, well-meaning, though, perhaps, careless, indifferent members of my congregation, some of whom are looking for, and needing, guidance and help, while others may be self-sufficient, and some, it may be, simply drifting through life without any real awakening to the meaning of church membership or to the higher possibilities of their lives generally?"

The pew, in turn, should be asking questions: "Why am I a member of this particular church, and what is the relation of this particular church to the wide and general church of God as established among men? What duties, what obligations, have I assumed in becoming a member of this church? Why this church instead of some other church? Has this church a distinctive mission to fulfil,— this particular church in this particular community,— and, if

*A paper read before the Unitarian Club of the May Memorial Church, Syracuse, N. Y.

so, how am I to help? What kind of work can this church do better than any other church, and what work can I do possibly better than any other individual member of this church?"

These are some questions that can be asked, and there is no particular importance to be attached to my membership unless I do ask these or similar questions.

It may be that I spend one hour in the week here simply for amusement, just as I would go to the opera, the theatre, a tennis match, or a bowling contest. Perhaps I like the preacher, perhaps the music, possibly the few minutes of social greetings after the service is over. It may be from habit, custom, because I was brought up that way, and it seems the natural thing to do on a Sunday morning, but really has no particular significance to me, does not touch the deeper springs of my nature or take hold of the moving forces of my being.

And, again, it may be because I actually do realize the need of help, because there are tendencies in my nature that I can see need to be checked, impulses that need control, and the preacher or the service helps me. I feel in such service something of the divine stirring within me; I feel myself a little stronger for it, somewhat reassured, more comfortable in mind; there is something within me that responds to all this; and I like to be brought into touch with it. This is a higher motive, but obviously not the highest.

The highest motive is the humble desire to be taught, the seeking for inspiration, the earnest

longing to be shown how best to serve,— the education *for* service. The old idea of going to church, of getting religion, of saying one's prayers, of reading the Bible, of being good for the sake of saving one's soul, is no longer the moving impulse with thoughtful people. Self-preservation in this world, or salvation for one's self in some other world, has come to be looked upon as *not* a high motive. We desire all these helps which the church supplies, we need all these things, we cannot get along without them; but we need them not for self-preservation, not as a sort of heavenly insurance for our own selfish souls, but as inspiration to service, as equipment for the battle against sin within and foes without.

Personally I must confess that I have not been a very good churchman, have not done for the church what I knew all the time I ought to be doing, or given the church due credit for what it has done for me personally, have not informed myself about the church, its history, its institutions, its divinely appointed work in the world to the extent that I should have done, and as it was my duty to do; so in what I am saying please do not get the idea that I am holding myself up as a model at all. It is in thinking of my own shortcomings, of my own neglect of opportunity, and wide divergence from duty,— since being asked to address you this evening,— that I have been led to call attention to these matters, so that, if anything I may say seems like preaching, the sermon is no more for you than for me.

I am quite confident that, the more one thinks about these matters, the more thoroughly it will settle down into his consciousness that the church is really the most important institution in the world, the institution that ministers most directly to our highest needs. The spiritual man is the real man, the education of the heart is more important than the training of the mind, though the two should go together. The profoundly religious man, if a well-balanced man, is the most masterful man we meet, and loyalty to one's church, its offices and institutions, and faithful attendance at its services should be a badge of honor everywhere.

It seems to me that somehow church people are becoming possessed with the idea that the proper way to interest the uninterested is to take up all sorts of work and discuss all sorts of questions not directly connected with the life, the interests, and the ministries of the church, especially as far as the men are concerned.

Now this might be true if we were overworking our men, if we were calling upon them to attend two or three services on Sunday and others during the week, hurrying them about on many errands, or keeping them devoutly kneeling at various shrines and observing numerous fasts, then it might be wise to divert their attention by various amusements, by occasionally calling them to other service and interesting them in other matters. But, so far as our own church is concerned, I do not discover such tendencies, or think we are in any great danger of overexercising our religious faculties.

On the other hand, I do think that in the multiplicity of other interests and duties we are rather inclined to forget or to ignore the immense importance of the religious life and the powerful agency the church has been, is to-day, and must continue to be in working out many of the most difficult problems humanity in its upward development has to face. We are apt to forget how large a part sentiment and idealism have to play in our many-sided lives, and that what is merely *seeming* to us, as we go along, turns out to be the most *real* and substantial thing we have to face in actual experience or build upon as a sure foundation for life, if that life is to be something of worth and value in the world.

As Unitarians may it not be wise for us to try to negative the charge, so frequently made by men of more orthodox leanings, that the broadening of our creed has usually been accompanied by a great decay of zeal and loss of interest in trying to uplift and redeem the sinful and the weak, and that we of the more intellectual or rational creeds do not feel the spiritual truths that the old creeds express, and therefore lose the spiritual life fed by these truths. These are matters to think about, but matters that our teachers and preachers can furnish more enlightenment upon than I can hope to.

But the condition of our church, its needs and its future,— I am referring now to our own Unitarian Church,— what can we, as members of our church and its various organizations do? I believe it to be the duty of every church to

become a real live wire in its community. That is, as an aggressive force for righteousness, for high spiritual standards, for a commanding position among the churches, not only spiritually, which we try to be, but *numerically.*

We have in our ministry and laity many good clear heads and good warm hearts, ripened under the teaching and guidance of lofty and inspired men during a long period of years, and with the noblest traditions stretching back of that, and here we are just a handful. We can't say it is the teaching or the preaching or the message, it is just ourselves. We have been complacently gorging ourselves with the richest intellectual food and the highest inspirational stimulants, and gone our way, "one to his farm and another to his merchandise," saying "how rich and beautiful, how plenteous is the feast," yet inviting no one in.

Now the light of the world is ours, the real twentieth-century message is ours, the real leadership is ours, the prophets have been ours for a century and more, the pioneers have done their work, the preachers are doing theirs, we laymen must do ours.

Now there are lots of things waiting for our churches and Men's and Women's Clubs to do. But my own thoughts are that the very first real work for us to undertake is to fill our churches right up full and put our pews at a premium. If we can fill our pews with men and women,—getting interested in each other and the cause, there will be no trouble about the

inspiration or the accomplishment of any legitimate work that can be devised.

Of course we all know the story of the insuperable difficulties connected with getting people to go to church nowadays, and we might as well get right down and face them. I wish all of you might read the chapter on "Obstacles in the way of the Church" in Dr. Crooker's admirable book on "The Church of To-day" which ought to be a textbook in the hands of every church member, Unitarian or other. We know about the stress and strain of modern life, social, industrial, and commercial. The mental and physical exhaustion, the need of Sunday recreation, the Sunday excursion, the Sunday baseball, the Sunday communion with nature in wood and field, Sunday tennis, Sunday golf, Sunday football, and Sunday squash.

I see these tired, wearied souls hurrying with their transfers from one street car to another on Sunday evenings, and sometimes I cannot but wonder if a quiet morning in the pew with a restful service, an inspiring short sermon, with soothing music and song, and then a quiet afternoon on porch or in garden shade, would not find them as rested in body and mind when evening comes as they are now after what has been a really strenuous day's work.

Then the great variety of other Sunday amusements,— the theatre, the picture show, the sacred concert, the wheel, and, for those who can afford it, the automobile. And then we have the many-paged Sunday newspapers, the cheap illustrated magazine, the short story, and sala-

cious sensational headlines attracting to stories of crime, and breaking of marriage vows for those whose literary aspirations halt at that level, the soft-cushioned chair in the corner of the library with a good book for those of more refined tastes.

Foreign travel and the vacation habit take many away from the churches for longer or shorter periods. The moving about, for which the modern flat or hotel life is responsible, keep many people from allying themselves permanently with any church. They go to listen to this preacher or that, or especially fine music attracts for a time, or the social prestige of some wealthy church; but this does not lead, as a rule, to settled church or religious life.

The club life of to-day has so many attractions,— the congenial meeting of friends whose interests in life are similar to our own, the pleasant interchange of ideas on current topics of interest, the solace of a good cigar, all harmless and useful in themselves, productive of a comfortable self-complacency that puts us at ease with the world and makes us so thoroughly satisfied with ourselves that the humble virtues of self-denial and devotion to duty are, for the time being, pushed aside.

Then we have the various Masonic organizations, the lodges of Odd Fellows, benevolent and fraternal societies, granges and trades unions, in which many may find at once their practical religion and the satisfaction of their social needs. Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, and mental healers of all sorts are drawing people

away from the traditional churches. Nevertheless, the great mass of people do remain attached to these churches in spite of these interests, as also of the commercialism, socialism, materialism, so rampant in our day, absorbing thought and interest and firing their votaries with consuming zeal to tear down and reconstruct society on the basis of some particular hobby; losing sight of the ideal, the moral, the spiritual; failing to heed the call of the church to worship, and to the higher ranges of social service which the churches stand for.

All these things we know the church has to contend with and should put out its attractions to meet, not by making our services shorter, more bald, less ornate, but by fuller ritual, sweeter music, by throwing more and more of the wealth of song, of ancient chant, historic symbolism, sounding the keynote of worship and the superior joys of the spirit's life.

Let us demonstrate that here, too, is recreation,— re-creation,— the lifting of the soul into a life that harmonizes more fully and sweetly with the beauties of the world we dwell in and the hopes we are thus confirming of a blessed future some time to be ours.

The way to begin is, of course, with ourselves. We each of us individually know that with rare exceptions we can be in our pews every Sunday morning. We *can* make it a point of duty, we *can* acquire the habit of church attendance, and we *can* influence members of our own household or near relatives, and, in some instances, friends, to become regular attendants. The more there

are to join in the responses, to lift up their hearts in song, the more enthusiastic becomes the service, and the greater uplift there is to the worship, the better the preacher can preach, the more extended and helpful is the influence of the church. There are hundreds and thousands of men and women in city and country who really need our church. Cannot some practical way be devised to get hold of them and bring them to us?

There is another thing wherein I think most Unitarians are generally lacking,— at least I know I am,— and that is in the study and appreciation of our history as a distinctive branch of the Christian Church, the origins of our beliefs or ways of thinking, the unique and sublime careers of our saints and heroes,— martyrs, too, I might say, for our church has had its martyrs.

Our history from the earliest times is full of interest. I cannot go into this generally, but our views were stoutly maintained by the ablest men and in the councils of the church way back in the fourth century. In Poland they flourished during the sixteenth century, and our historians tell us were stamped out with the greatest cruelty. In the seventeenth century they came to light in England: such men as John Milton, Sir Isaac Newton, and John Locke can fairly be classed as Unitarian in belief. Fascinating, indeed, is the story of our New England development, going back to the Rev. John Wise of Ipswich in 1715, Dr. Charles Chauncey in Boston about 1740, and that important event

in 1787, when James Freeman, a Unitarian, became rector of King's Chapel, which was the first Episcopal church established in New England. Channing, Parker, the Wares, Starr King, James Freeman Clarke, Dr. Bellows, Furness, Frothingham, Hedge, Bartol, Ames, Hale, May, Calthrop,— many are the names among our clergy whose personalities have been commanding, and whose lives are worthy of careful study.

In the higher ranges of literature our roll of honor, small as we are numerically, easily leads that of any denomination. Among educators many of our faith have held high place. In historians and statesmen we have not been lacking, of great philanthropists we have furnished many. Our sermon literature ranks high. We should have more distinctly Unitarian books in our libraries and homes.

In this it seems to me we are lamentably deficient. Nothing surprises me more than the general lack of information and interest in our distinctively Unitarian Literature and in the publications of our American Unitarian Association. Books, sermons, tracts of a literary quality unquestionably high, morally uplifting and spiritually inspiring, are flowing through the presses under the imprint of that Association and should be in our homes, in our public libraries, on the counters of our book stores and that through the demands of our own people to know what their leaders and teachers are thinking about and writing about and what contribution they are making toward the solution of the

pressing problems of the day. Booksellers generally do not have on hand our Unitarian books. If someone asks for a copy, the answer is "Not in stock, but I can order one for you." I wish we might wake up generally to the fact that we *have* a Unitarian Literature, that it is worth while to know it, study it and to aid the Publication Department of our Association in its wide and general distribution by asking the dealers for the books and enquiring for them in the public libraries.

But perhaps I am not practical in all this, perhaps I have permitted myself to be carried along by an enthusiasm born of a quiet day's reflection on these things far away from home and the actualities of life as I looked from a window in the Adirondacks out upon the treetops in the valley below me, across to foot-hill ranges and giant mountains beyond them, a view which made great deeds seem easy and small obstacles infinitely small.

Quite likely we are to go on in the same easy way, quieting these stirrings of our souls with a little more spiritual sleep and moral slumber, and thinking that the other fellow will do these things if we do not, or that the minister can do it all. If through his influence and personality he adds now and then to the list of pew-holders, and the revenues are increased, we can lumber along in the same old ox-cart, permitting the Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian electrified trains to dash past us, having appropriated the motive power of our liberalized, enlightened, and progressive thought.

I have intimated that the drift of the times is away from the churches, and is this not largely because the drift of thought is away from the Orthodox beliefs? But we all know that the inner spiritual life which these older beliefs have so constantly fed is essential to the right sort of living and the perpetuity of all that is best in our rational life. The churches are all marching in our direction; but the responsibility of leadership is ours, and it is a great responsibility. The wisest men with other affiliations see this as well as we ourselves. You may recall what Dean Stanley of Westminster wrote upon his return to England after a visit to this continent, that "the Unitarian Church, including within itself almost all the cultured scholarship of America in the beginning of this, the nineteenth century, was unquestionably at the summit of the civilized Christianity of the Western continent," and again, "While in America I heard a great many sermons from many different preachers, but the sermon itself in almost every instance was by Ralph Waldo Emerson."

I might multiply quotations bearing the same import from widely varied sources, but have not the space. It is safe to say that progress theologically is everywhere toward our standards, but this very progress will be a distinct loss to the world if it is intellectual alone and not accompanied with the spiritual as well.

Accuracy of thought and coolness of brain must be distinctly influenced by warmth of heart and the life of the spirit in the soul of man. As a wise teacher of our time has said, "In vain

would the most perfect theory of the universe be called a religion if it could not stir the souls of men, if it could not take hold of life and mould it into higher forms"; and Dr. Gordon, "The *best* theology that does nothing is worse than a poor theology that agonizes to save the world."

The fact, then, that the highest religious truths have been committed to our keeping, that as men grow thoughtful and wise they will naturally be drawn toward us in thought, at least, is no excuse for sloth or inactivity in trying to draw them safely within our spiritual fold, lest, with hearts untouched by the life and spirit of the Master of men, they drift by into atheism, confusion, and anarchy.

In this short paper I have touched upon many things, and have only tried to give some hints of what we might be and do. Now I trust that we may gradually, at least, come to consider and discuss some of these seriously. The influence of our church and of our thought on the literature of our time, the philosophy and theology of our time, humanizing, modifying, upbuilding the faith of our time, is so great that it should be, and I trust is, appreciated by every thoughtful Unitarian, and I want every one to get enthusiastic about it, and go right to work building up our church, making it worthy of the honored names which have given it distinction at home and abroad.

If our men will get as busy as our women and as enthusiastic, the results will soon be seen and will astonish us. Our church should be, must

be, religiously speaking, the Nation's beacon light shining afar and blessing widely. What more important work can we do than to keep its lamps trimmed and burning?

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston.

American Unitarian Association

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[No. 263]

GOD'S PART AND OURS

BY

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BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

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GOD'S PART AND OURS

Thou wilt perfect that which concerneth me.—PSALM cxxxviii. 8.

He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it. — PHIL. i. 6.

THERE was a time when this earth was uninhabited by human beings, and such a time may come again. Whether life will be extinguished by a grand catastrophe or by a slow decline of the sun's heat, and whether the end is to come in ten, ten thousand, or ten million years, are questions we can more easily ask than answer. But it seems reasonable to suppose that the object for which the earth exists, whatever it is, will be fully accomplished. Is it not also reasonable to believe that the human race has not been created in vain,— that the object of our existence, whatever it is, will be fully accomplished? For we are obliged to contemplate life on earth as having had a beginning, and as likely to have an end. More closely home comes the fact that for each of us the entrance upon this stage of being and the exit from it can never be far apart. Will the object of our individual existence be accomplished? It seems idiotic to doubt that there is such an object. Can we help asking, What are we here for? Is there any wise and worthy purpose behind your life and mine? And what is to come of it? Our existence seems involved in a vast maze of things and connected with a long

chain of causes and events. Are we merely being played with by pitiless or Puckish natural forces? Are we

> "But eddies of the dust,
> Uplifted by the blast and whirled
> Along the highway of the world,
> A moment only, then to fall
> Back to a common level all,
> At the subsiding of the gust"?

Ah! if we could know or if we could restfully believe that the Power which brought us here really means something good, really has a large plan and provisions for us, and really cares for our present and lasting welfare, how gratefully we might accept this strange gift of life, and how comfortably we might occupy our seats on the planet as it "plunges eyeless on forever!"

In all our higher moods, what we most deeply want is to feel assured that we are being prepared for a worthy destiny by changes for the better going on within ourselves. Make us sure of that, and all misgivings will give place to peace and joy. If day by day, or even year by year, I am able to see that I am becoming a nobler kind of being, it will be impossible to doubt that the laws and forces by which I live are entirely friendly, so that they can be forever trusted. Why do we not always feel this happy confidence? Why cannot all mankind feel this way? Perhaps we can find out why. But, first, why do we suffer this sense of incompleteness and self-satisfaction? Why are we doomed to feel that

we are capable of becoming and doing and enjoying immensely more than we have yet attained? The question ought to be its own answer. We ask it because we aspire, because we are inwardly in motion, because we are made to grow in wisdom and in goodness. "The hope of a wise heart is prophecy." It is as if a voice whispered in the heart of the egg, as it thrills to the brooding warmth, "You shall yet be a bird!" or in the seed, as it is stirred by the touch of the sun ray, "You shall yet be a tree!"

Here is the patience of the saints, or of those who are in the way of becoming saints. It is "the patience of hope." They have learned to trust the purpose of good which is within and behind their personal life; in other words, they believe in God. This is the joyful cry and uplift of the Hebrew who wrote the One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Psalm: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. Forsake not the works of thine own hands." And this is Paul's encouragement to his struggling brethren at Philippi, "Being confident that he who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." Behind the dialect of Jew or Christian is the strong, steady beat of the human heart when it rests in the higher Heart.

But our fears, as well as our hopes, have inward causes. It is fortunate for us that we can only keep faith alive by faithfulness. No man ever felt full confidence in God while wilfully breaking his laws. All badness in us makes us blind to his goodness, and makes us afraid that

he will let things go to the bad. The perfect love that casts out fear is the love that clasps both divinity and humanity. No man feels forgiven till he forgives, nor takes hold of divine help till he tries to help himself. To rest and rejoice in that good purpose of God which is within and behind our life we must make that purpose ours; we must choose for ourselves that life of filial and fraternal rectitude which he chooses for us. How can we feel that all things work for good unless we are working for good?

If one finds his life unfolding into conscious spirituality, into wisdom and love as vital and guiding principles, into trustful, happy sonship, it will slowly dawn upon him that this is a sharing of the infinite and universal life, that he and the Father are one. The creative forces will flow into and through soul and body, like soft, circulating streams, as surely and as naturally as the energies of spring and summer flow into and through the organism of a tree.

Here the Christian gospel and the gospel of science utter the same message of evolution,—evolution in the world of mind as in the world of matter. All forces and processes conspire to produce character. As Humboldt says, "Property, government, society, books, religion,—all are but scaffolding to build a man." The man is the end, and not a part of the perishable means. Destruction itself is but a way-station along the high road of progressive creations. Philosophy, poetry, and prophecy unite in celebrating the mysterious power which works for the regeneration or renewal of our moral being.

Each one of us is an incomplete creation,—something begun, but not finished. The wonder and awfulness of the situation lies here. At a certain stage of our own development we are called to take part in the process: we find that we can help or hinder our own progress in wisdom and in virtue, we can rise into that higher life to which we are born heirs or we can sink into moral poverty and debasement. There is no wave of destiny which sweeps us straight toward the shores of perfection. The same wind which takes the skilful sailor into port may dash the unskilful one upon the rocks. That was a sensible and manly prayer which the Greek sailor offered to Neptune, his god of the sea, "Thou canst save me if thou wilt, or thou canst drown me if thou wilt; but, howsoever that may be, I will hold my rudder true." One need not greatly mourn if such a brave man never comes back to port. If he goes to the bottom, he lands safely: he has learned the greatest lesson this life can teach him,—he has learned to be true to himself, and thus to the Highest. Amid the conflict of elements around him — the roar of winds and rage of waters — he has found a firm and steady power at the centre of his own being. No matter how good God is, I must be good, too, from loving and rational choice of good, or I shall miss the blessedness of goodness as surely as I shall miss of health by intemperance or of sunlight by blindness.

I once called a five-year-old boy "a little man." "I am not a man: I am a child," he said. "But there's a man in you," said I, "just as there's

an oak-tree in an acorn." "But what if the hogs eat up the acorn?" was the question that flashed back, and made me quite silent and thoughtful. Nature is full of these solemn parables,— crushed seeds, addled eggs, blighted flowers, abortive growths.

The eccentric Lorenzo Dow once gave notice that he would preach in a grove on the Calvinistic doctrine, "Once in grace, always in grace." When the people came together, they saw the preacher climb a tree. Then he cried out, "Hold on, or you'll fall!" Dropping from one limb to another, he shouted each time, "Hold on, or you'll fall!" At last he dropped from the lower limb to the ground, and walked away, leaving his hearers to make their own application.

It is the tempter's voice which whispers, "If thou art God's child, there is no danger in casting thyself down; for his angels will bear thee up." There is no true way of putting things that will let us off from taking care of ourselves, and keeping our hearts with all diligence. Confidence in the law we live under comes from obedience and loyalty. This confidence, that he who has taken our life in charge will not neglect or desert his own work,— that he will perfect that which concerns us,— cannot be misplaced; for such confidence never comes to a man unless he is trying to do his best. Of course, he has no business to complain that he cannot see the way when he leaves the way or when he shuts his eyes. I know that in these days of questioning and of intellectual perplexity many sincere people find it difficult to believe in a fatherly God, and for

all such bewildered ones I have only tenderest sympathy. But, as a general rule, I suppose we ought to confess that we do not see God because we are not looking for him, and that we do not trust him because we do not put ourselves in the way to know and love him. A disobedient or unfilial feeling so long as it lasts will make it impossible for any child to come into happy relations with father or mother. All our inward disorders confuse our vision and make for us a caricature of the universe.

This is our encouragement: Whenever we fall into the order and keep step with our own duties and with the divine procession of events, we are inwardly tranquillized; we gain self-possession and assurance; we move with the moving forces, and all things work together for good. Even seeming hindrances become helps,— as savage warriors believe that the courage and strength of the enemies they kill will pass into their own hearts and muscles. Who has ever mastered a difficulty or conquered a weakness or carried an honorable burden or performed an appointed task without gaining new power and confidence? Rough seas make the best sailors and hard climates produce a sturdy people. When we accept life as a training-school in patience, fortitude, service, and faithfulness, then it is that we are working out our own salvation as God works in us, according to his good pleasure. "His good pleasure,"— what a sweet, gracious, inspiring phrase, if we would take it aright! The austerity and severity of the spiritual laws, the relentless uniformity of the order of cause and effect,

the seeming pitilessness that pushes us back upon ourselves and into this awful solitude,— if we reflect a little, would we have it otherwise? "His good pleasure" will be ours also when faith grows brave enough to match the inward forces against all outward pleasure, and to accept the rugged discipline of duty and trial like

> "A daring pilot in extremity,
> Pleased with the danger when the waves run high."

Around us and within us are ample provisions for the best life we are capable of at our present stage of development: could we ask for more? Surely, we would not wish that even heaven should be offered too cheaply or forced upon us as something inevitable, so as to make us irresponsible and immortal infants.

The state of childish weakness, ignorance, error, and evil in which we find ourselves must be a good state to start from, because it is not a good state to stay in. But there is always an open way out of such a state, and I know no better evidence that this world is a nursery of souls than this: We are made capable of discerning and choosing the better of two ways of life. To make that choice is to ascend. I take this kind of existence as a perpetual opportunity and invitation to come up higher. It is the Christian interpretation of life as a Father's loving gift; it is an assurance that his laws and our own nature are parts of one system; that his help is always within reach, because that help is to be found within ourselves, and it acts through our own

faculties. This assurance, this faith in the order and in the Orderer, is enough of itself to set our life in harmony, enough to reconcile and restore the most sinful; for in "yielding ourselves unto God" or trusting ourselves to the guidance of light and the support of love our boat swings into the right current. Are not our aspirations his inspirations?

Let us look inward and study ourselves a little. Does not every man find in his own nature something which corresponds and responds to a spirit higher than his own? If he has the least bit of wisdom or goodness, it gives him a hint of more, and makes it easy to believe there is more. Ah! that is the door that is forever open between our small humanity and the great Divinity, that is the avenue of communication and communion between the Father and the child. The least element of reason and conscience is like a germ of immortal light and goodness. What is this worth to us?

The vital point in a seed is an all-sufficient provision for growth, when it shall be reached by the quickening influence. So is this spiritual principle in man an all-sufficient provision for his becoming a conscious child of God or a pure angelic being, when he yields to that better prompting which he recognizes as the upward call. No matter how much badness and darkness there is in the man, these may be negative qualities, like inertness or torpor in the seed. The man's real history, like that of the seed, begins with the vitalizing touch, which is sure to come, whether welcomed or not. If there is one

sensitive, responsive spot, one point of light, if he cherishes one right desire, let him accept it as a sign of the presence and power of Almighty Love. In that Life which is at once human and divine there is power enough to subdue all things unto itself. Just so the vital germ of grain, hid in the dark, cold earth, forces its way up through the clods, up into the air and light, when it feels down there in its grave the warm touch of the quickening sun.

Is not our true nature to be found in this germ of spirit life? Where should we look for the true nature of the seed? Not in the clod under which it lies buried, not in the coarse husk which envelops it, not even in the delicate albumen which is packed around the germ, but the germ itself; for there is the seat of life and the promise of larger life. Oh, let us never mistake our outward possessions nor our bodies nor our bodily impulses, nor even our inherited temperament nor our acquired habits, for our real and inmost being! All these are outlying provinces, to be brought under control and culture. Our true kingdom, with king and throne, is found deeper, — found in that life which is hidden in God. "Hidden with Christ," Paul would like to have me say; for the Christ-life and this true spiritual life of man are of the same kind.

When a man simply follows the lead of what he knows is best in himself, when he sets to organizing his whole life according to the pattern shown him in his highest visions, when he abandons himself to the guidance and control of that authority which speaks in his own reason and sense of

right, he will never doubt that a good work has begun in him. He will never doubt that this work is carried on by "the Power, not himself, which makes for righteousness." The more fully his will and affections come into harmony with these discoveries of what is true and good, the more rapidly will his better life unfold, and the more confidently will he say: "Thou wilt perfect that which concerneth me. He who has begun this good work will complete it, till the Father sees his perfect image in his child."

Then he will find himself in fellowship with all good men of all times and of all names; for he will belong in their company, he will be one of them. Then he will understand the open secret of Jesus. The great Son of God will be recognized as a brother, for the same spirit of sonship will bear inward witness to their joint heirship. And what is this spirit of sonship, in Jesus or in us, if it be not this sharing of divine qualities, this life of willing obedience and trusting love, which ever turns to the light and follows it wherever it may lead, though it be to the cross?

Suffering, in most cases, perhaps in all cases, is a part of the necessary programme. In the best lives suffering is not sought, but is accepted as a means of helping others, or as a part of the battle against evil. But with nearly all of us it is the fire that drives out the dross and leaves the gold pure. It is not likely that such crude creatures as we are can be refined and raised out of animalism or taught the serious meaning of our own existence by living in continual pleasure and self-gratification. Therefore we

must pass through the school of trial, self-denial, struggle, pain; we must learn to go without what we like when it is hurtful to ourselves or to others. He who has begun a good work in us can only complete it by taking us through a series of births and deaths. If this world were an easier one for us,— if we could more frequently get the best things without cost, or if we could nearly always have our own way,— would it be so well for us after all?

God will do his part; so much is sure; so much we may forever take for granted. No power in the universe will put any fatal obstacle in my path to perfection if I do not. On the contrary, all things will work that way when I work that way. Therefore, I will never charge my faults or my sins upon anyone but myself; nor shall I even charge them to myself when once the true light has banished the darkness and the true life has made death forgotten. I shall put all my sins behind my back, simply by turning my face and my feet toward the upward way.

I believe the universe is made on a plan which favors the growth of God-like human beings, just as it is made on a plan which favors the growth of plants and planets and suns, and systems of worlds. The whole apparatus is as suitable and adequate for producing spiritual results as for producing physical ones. Wisdom and love in us are provided for as surely as chemistry and vegetation in nature. The Power which is busy and constant in all these processes among the atoms is just as dependable and as near at hand for whatever processes are needed to guide and en-

lighten our minds or to inspire and cheer and purify our hearts. The wisdom that marks out our way is the same — absolutely the same — as that which leads the stars in their courses. The critical and delicate point is to secure the harmony and coöperation of man's thought, love, and will with God's. Then all goes well.

We have need of this faith every day; for every day brings very real trials and many seeming confusions, around and within. The discomforts of an ocean voyage are more easily borne when the passengers can trust to the wise masterliness of her captain, to the accurate guidance of the compass, to the stanchness of the ship, and to the powerful enginery that pushes her prow steadily through winds and waves toward the desired haven. How small, yet how seriously sacred, is the part which each passenger must take, whether he ride on the ocean steamer or on this little planet! We are taken along; day and night, through the years, we are taken along; and what concerns us is not the wisdom or good will of the management, but our own good sense and good behavior on the voyage.

How does a man explain his life to himself? Can he explain it without recognizing a divine purpose in it and behind it? If he thinks he is his own maker, or that he is the offspring of blind chance or mere fate,— if he is in the habit of thinking that there is no higher wisdom than his own, that there is no appointed road laid out for him to travel, but that he must find or make a road for himself, that there is no provision or prevision except of such sort as one manufactures

in his own brain,— if he thus feels that there is no friendly care over him and no glorious destiny before him, why, then, all this talk of faith and hope and love will be thrown away; for to him it will not mean anything at all.

But if the man can rationally and honestly look up and say, "The Power that made me cannot have made me in vain; I will accept my life as a great opportunity; I will take all my experiences as a part of my education; I will try to fit myself to every situation I am called to fill; I will keep stepping toward the light; I will do what I can to make this world and this day good for everybody,"— then that man takes his place with Jesus Christ; and in his heart there will grow the feeling: "I am a child in the Father's house; he has given me being; he has made a place for me; he has prepared for me an inheritance; he has undertaken to bring me up, and he will perfect that which concerns me; he will carry on his own work to completion. From him is my origin, with him is my destiny. His will shall be my law: his purpose shall be my purpose."

[No. 264]

THE SPARROW'S FALL

BY

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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The American Unitarian Association was Founded in 1825 with the Following Expressed Purpose

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE SPARROW'S FALL

"THE sparrow does not fall to the ground without your Father," said Jesus. But the sparrow *does* fall! And all day long the little creature lies in the grass beneath the nest, longing upward for the breast of the mother-bird. And the sun looks down and burns it, the winds chill it, the grasshoppers stare and leap and browse around it, the ants run over it; and when the evening brings the song back to the fields, it is a song in which the sufferer has not even a listener's part. All the pomp of Nature, all the gladness of the summer day, has swept by it, and what single tender thought in the long triumphant hours has noted the tiny tragedy happening in the grass?

The truth is, there are sparrows falling all the time, and human sparrows among them. And not only does Nature seem indifferent, but often she flings into them such exaggeration of pain that the word of Jesus almost laughs at us, "Not without your Father!" That bird's unheeded chirp of pain is but one note in a great chorus of sadness. Let us face the fullness of the tragedy; for Nature will be honest, if we are not. She asks for no smooth words from us, is ashamed of no confession; and if we hide or palliate her deeds, she but confounds our optimism with some new agony. So let us face the tragedy.

As, in this day of telegraphs, we *have* to! To-day we watch, we listen, through all lands. Now it is a mine on fire, and now a railroad accident. Now the cry rises from a wreck on a rock-bound coast, and two hundred men and women are swept out like a patch of sea-weed on the waves; and now it comes from the two ships that meet at night and blindly doom each other in mid-ocean. Now it is an earthquake,— and then a tidal-wave,— and then a river-flood. It is on the small home-scale: our neighbor's boy is drowned, or his little child comes into life with a twisted back or poisoned blood,— and he was never offered the privilege of declining birth. Or a woman suddenly dies, and who can show the father it is "goodness" that his boys and girls should grow up unmothered through the shaping years of childhood? Or the father kisses the children, hurries to his morning work, and is brought back at noon a bleeding crush,— he has fallen from the scaffold with his bricks; and with that noon the wife begins a grim and life-long fight for food. It is on the great world-scale: everywhere we watch the creatures living on each other, one thriving by another's woe, fattening by another's death. All lives struggle together for existence, and the races improve only in virtue of Nature's coronation of victors. Men grow rich because other men grow poor. Capital accumulates among the few and speeds on social progress, because masses of mankind are bulked to do the needful drudgeries of earth. Wars ruin civilizations that have taken centuries to ripen. Nations wane and drop like brown

leaves from history with hardly a trace of service left behind.

Now what Calvinism of Nature is this! What an arraignment of God! Confronting so much tragedy, gazing at so many sparrows lying in the grass,— bird-sparrows, human sparrows, nation-sparrows,— one almost cries, "Better if the Father were *not* in it!" No wonder that men gazing have invented Devils.

Yet you and I do not believe in any Devil, and in the bottom of our hearts not one whit does either of us doubt that the Father *is* in each and every fall! *How comes such overmastering faith in goodness?* With these spectacles of tragedy multiplied and magnified over so many acres of the earth and water how is it that Jesus could have said those words, and that our hearts echo them with "One fall only is impossible,— to fall *out of* the hands of the loving God?" Whence comes our faith? Are there *reasons* for the faith? If there be, and if they grow familiar to our minds in quiet hours, they may help us in hours of strain and shudder when the other thought lurks,—"Where is God, that he can let this be?"

I

Reasons for the faith we have. I do not claim that, taken singly or together, they amount to demonstration. Let me call them rather, reasons *towards* the faith. Is not "faith" always larger than the offered proofs? It is so with those two bottom faiths on which all physical

sciences are based,— our faiths in Nature's unity, and in the uniformity of Nature's laws. We never prove, nor ever can prove, either; we can but add unceasing illustration *going* to prove them. Should we expect it to be otherwise with faith in moral law? But four reasons *towards* this faith we have.

The first is this: — The sparrow flutters in the grass, but its pangs cannot hide the fact that the grass around it is beautiful and royally arrayed; cannot dim the wonder of that resurrection miracle which stirs the bare brown fields each spring with its green multitudes; cannot make one blind and deaf to the busy life of bee and ant and cricket that is filling it with music; cannot make one overlook the happy sparrows chattering on the fence, or the home swinging in the tree-bough, where the all-pervading Life incarnates itself in the loves and trusts and dignities and duties of a bird-mother and her brood. It *is* a tragedy, but so many things between the clover and the stars seem to tell of ordered beauty and of peaceful ways. Look *up!* Unhasting and unresting, the worlds above move silently around the heavens, till wild men think them gods, so bright, so sure, so tireless is their pace. Look *inward!* Are not we who look and listen wonderfully made? Can we forget the last night's quiet sleeping? the force within that drew the unwilled breath, and swelled the punctual blood-tides twice a minute through every little inlet of our body, all so unconsciously to us? Is not health healthful,— and can more be said to praise the daylight? Look *around!* Are not

the children joyful, the aged peaceful, and men and women in their prime exultant in their power? Are not the solitary set in families? Does not this old earth freshen thrice a century all over with new faces, to keep the laughter up? Do we not think? Do we not love? Do we not feel that we share strength with the Universe when duty calls and we obey? And is not this thinking, loving, obeying, trusting, gladness unspeakable? The sparrow falls,— the vessel strikes,— the train crashes,— the mother dies, — but all around them there is order, beauty, blessing, joy; and at any given place or moment of the tragedy, I think that, looking, we can usually discern a thousand facts of order and of happiness to the one which startles us as blur and evil.

And this makes one reason why we cannot help the thought that goodness may be even in that exception, the Father even in the sparrow's fall. *Maybe,*— that is all that the reason gives. But if, during the quiet, before our turn for sorrow comes, this fact of order, beauty, joy as the background and environment of suffering becomes familiar to our minds, perhaps in the sad moment our eyes will not deny it nor the heart forget it. The thought may stand by, like a silent, sympathizing friend, to steady us.

II

But now to face directly that "exception," — the sparrow fluttering in the grass. Can deeper

looking at it help to turn this *may-be* goodness into certainty? A second reason for our trust is this: As man's knowledge grows, what looks so like exception and disorder in the world more and more reveals itself as *order-in-the-making;* and the thought dawns, What if God himself cannot prevent the tragedies? What if God himself cannot prevent his tragedies? In the main, these tragedies are caused by Nature's forces holding their calm way across the ignorance and helplessness of living creatures. But let Nature's problem be to make a "man," then Omnipotence itself, so far as we can see, cannot avoid these two conditions: (1) that there shall be, on Nature's part, fixed laws of force, and (2) that, on man's part, there shall be the power to learn these laws,— a power pre-supposing ignorance, — with more or less of freedom in obeying them.

Why "unavoidable," this last condition? Because man is not "man," unless he be in some degree self-moved, self-taught, self-made,— a creature ingirt with power to add mental and moral stature to himself by the methods of experience and obedience. The dower of perfect knowledge, or the fate of full compulsion laid upon his acts, might make a glorious machine; but never on either terms could "man" arrive, however long the planet waited for him.

And *why* "unavoidable," that first condition, — the fixed, unchanging laws? Because fixed law alone makes man's knowledge possible, and man's freedom operative. How could "knowledge" be, if past experience did not guarantee the future? Because Nature never wavers like

a weak mother, experience *tells,*— driving man slowly on to knowledge first, then farther on to loyalty, and thus to Nature's benediction; and so uniformly to her benediction that at last he learns to trust her,— learns to believe that her ends hold blessing, even when he cannot yet discern it. If, through pity, the train this once did not rush on to clash; if the storm did not suck down the ship, because its cabins carried grace and goodness; if the fever did not strike, because its victim would be the self-forgetter who had drawn near to save us in our fever; if flames refused to burn this martyr; if nails refused to pierce and thorns to wound, because it was a Christ upon the cross; if war did not make orphans and lay low the nation's fair young strength; to say all, if prayer were heard as we foolish ones would often like to have it heard, and the sovereign forces ever turned traitor to themselves in would-be goodness to us, then Nature would be *cruel to us* as well as traitor to herself. Only because her iron is always iron, her steam always steam, do we learn how to harness iron and steam together and add their strength to our weak arms of flesh. Only because the winds will never fall asleep at man's petition, do we learn to predict the storm and signal to sailors across a continent when to dare the sea. Only because the disease will never spare us as long as it can feed on us, do we learn to outwit it, and, taking thought therefrom, to add years to the average human life,— that very cubit to its length which Jesus cited as impossible. If war could be war without its battle-fields, if intem-

perance could be intemperance without its victims, how should we learn to lay aside our enmities and lusts and own the higher reason, and come at last to practise the Beatitudes as human instincts,— that which they are to Jesus and his kin? It is the *laws,* it is the steadfast laws, then, amid which we live and move and have our being, that make human knowledge possible.

Nor knowledge only,— human freedom, too. I argue not the fact of freedom, but assume it: I only say that these same Fates around us make operative the free will in us. To lift the weight, the lever must not bend; to weave the design, the live woof grows on a firm-stretched warp. So with man's desires and his intents: unless the forces we work through be loyal to themselves, no chosen aim of ours could reach, except by chance, its purposed goal. If gravitation might give out or change its pull at any moment, if elements combined at random, if heat and light and electricity were wanton in their rates of motion, what servants would man have to do his will? Not only none to trust,— he would be slave himself, the very slave of Chance. Just because the Fates work everywhere around him, it comes within his power to execute a "choice."

See, then, how the matter stands. If Nature's problem be to make a "man," I said, there must be more or less of freedom in us and of power to learn,— a power that pre-supposes ignorance; and to make this freedom and this learning possible, Nature must be unrelenting in her laws. Now it is to these grim laws, with this our ignorance and freedom under them, that are due in-

numerable tragedies,— the tragedies we typify in "sparrow-falls." Across all ignorance, across all willfulness, the Forces hold their way in silence, and crush man's groans to silence.— Do we not begin to see that the disorder of the world may be order-in-the-making? And can we not in perfect reverence say that "Infinite" is not so infinite, "Omnipotent" not so omnipotent, as the straining words would fain make out? Is it not true of the All-Working Power as of smaller agents, that given ends necessitate the use of given means? What if Omnipotence itself be so conditioned by its own good ends that it cannot *help* the happening of the tragedies?

But grant this, grant it all, and still the heart cries, "Is there no *waste* of suffering? When Nature burns three hundred lives as readily as three, when earthquake-waves drown men like flies, when the ignorance of sin of one man involves a lineage or a nation in disaster, is there nothing spendthrift in such a tragedy?" Again the mind, slow thinking, answers: That seeming spendthrift unconcern of Nature may be her deep concern, that seeming waste may be some arch-economy of tragedy. For look again: to reach her end — a "man," an ever-growing "man"—as speedily as possible, all fragments of mankind's experience must be garnered up and utilized. To this end are we bound together in one vast brotherhood of acting and re-acting influence, all members of the race, yea, of all races, actively and passively co-operating,— nothing living, nothing dying, to itself. That

not a pang be lost, life is linked to life across all time and across all space. Across all *time*: hence those dread laws of heritage by which the weakened organ, the disease, are transmitted to irresponsible and helpless sufferers. That looks like waste of woe. But all the quicker thus they teach the world the rule of health; and clearing blood, the bones grown straight, the lengthening average of life, the greatening powers of human joy and human usefulness,— all these transmitted also,— attest the good intent that lurked and worked along the ages. Across all *space*: the tiger cholera, stealing from the Ganges, strides with silent footfall, leaving death behind it, through Asia, Europe, swims the deep, and at last robs homes upon the Mississippi's banks; the war in America starves English weavers and sets the slime of Egypt white with cotton-harvests. Does it look like waste? These are the "vicarious atonements" of history,— the great give-and-take by which the generations and the races bequeath and share experience, one suffering from, and with, and for another, to the end that "man" may have life and have it more abundantly, more speedily. And there are countless small vicarious atonements of the daily life, in which we all unceasingly take part,— the ever-spread communion-table of the heart-break and the blood. It *is* tragedy. "How long, O Lord?" we cry, as we gaze at the lasting, circling woe. Yet can we not discern that this communion *hives experience the faster*, and so *brings faster on the general good?* that by these same laws of communion, wisdom and saintship, also,

are garnered in ministries of joy? and that only by such co-operation, making the race one man could life so soon become the boon it is to us, the ever-richening boon it will be for future populations who shall call us the ancients? Not that we can always *trace* the vicarious and co-operative suffering to its outcome in beneficence; too vast, too long, too secret and complex are the connections in the social organism. But when, over and over again, evil is seen to be at last evolving good, assurance grows within us that good will always and everywhere prevail; and that the seeming exceptions, when truly understood, will prove subtler, vaster instances of order-in-the-making. In this assurance, though we stand amid a very rain of sparrow-falls, the mind as mind, not just as heart, begins to own the truth of Jesus' insight, "Not one sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father."

The doctrine of "evolution" has added immensely to the argument for faith in goodness by throwing such lights as these upon the "mystery of evil." Immensely, if the doctrine account for nothing but the rise of man from the savage towards the angel; for it has brought to view these laws of human heredity and interaction. But if the scope of evolution extend throughout the universe; if the whole creation has groaned and struggled together towards the better, to the end that "man" be attained; and if what *we* know by that name, "man," be really but a station on the way to forms of higher life beyond,—in that case we, children of the "evolution" age, can discern, more plainly than ever men before

could do, the working, everywhere in time and space, of moral law. We begin to see how the sparrow's fall in all its myriad varieties, how the war of races between the populations of the very water-drop, may be essential parts of that beneficence which gives us, who have reached the stature of a "man," the joys of home and love and heart's peace and hope of heaven. Jesus, and such as he, fore-*felt* what we begin to *see*,— that the tragedies are *God's* tragedies, carrying out a blessed end.

This, then, is the second reason towards our faith in goodness. Still *towards* it,— that is all I say; but this goes far along the path. Our first reason was the general order and beauty in which, visibly, each tragedy is set. Our second — it is, in truth, but a deepening and expansion of the first — is that in the tragedy itself, in what seems to be disorder, we are learning to trace an order and a beauty vaster than any visible to sense. The Devil theory has largely vanished; Good and Ill, that old duality in Nature, have long been closing together into a unity whose single name is "Good." One step remains to take; not Devil theory only, but Accident theory, must vanish too,— it is but milder heathenism. For if this line of thought be true, it is the love of God that we are calling "tragedy" and "accident."

Therefore I say again:— Now, in the quiet, before our turn for sorrow comes, let us seek to establish faith so firmly on this reason that our mind cannot forget it, nor our heart deny it, when

the sad hour comes. The thought may serve like a strong and silent friend to steady us.

III

But in that hour we ask for more than steadying. "Each for all" is a noble law, looked at in the cool of thought, and nerves for noble bearing; but the converse law, "All for each," — is this as sure? We fain would know that that very sparrow in the grass there, that life-long victim of the inborn scrofula, those children orphaned by the accident, that widow whose support is gone, that little child turned beggar by a father's drink,— that these are not simply suffering vicariously for the good of others, but that Love is over and around *them,* while they suffer. And when our own turn comes, although we remind ourselves, "Others have suffered for me from the foundation of the world; my joy in life is due to wisdom won by others' pangs unnumbered in the past and present; now my own hour comes, and I must play my part in the great drama of sacrifice bravely and uncomplainingly,"— although we speak thus to our hearts, I think, while saying it, we long for something closer than this far thought to keep our faith in goodness bright and warm. "Right?" Oh, yes. "And necessary?" Yes; but in this right and necessary fall of mine could I but feel, could I but *feel,* that "the Everlasting Arms are underneath!"

Here, then, is the third reason for our faith.

How can we fancy that those old Bible words are true? Because of *human* arms, the arms of tender men and women, thrown round me as I suffer. *Where did that tenderness of theirs originate?* Where but in Mother Nature, whose offspring these men and women are? "Whatever is in them was first in it." "Nothing can be *e*volved but what is first *in*volved." Because, in the order of Nature, you pity me, love me, give yourself to pain for me; because, in the order of Nature, you long unspeakably to comfort me; because, in the order of Nature, the sudden tragedy makes the whole village blossom into self-forgetting friendliness; because the sufferers themselves are often eager to add pain to pain in martyrdoms of love; and because, in the order of Nature, such tenderness streams forth more surely and circles more widely as the race improves,— in a word, because, *in the order of Nature and by her creating,* there are mothers, fathers, Christs, therefore it is that we believe in Love at the heart of all the Law. Good men and women are embodied arguments that God is good. To comprehend the One-in-All whom we try to think of as the central Lover, passes power; but of the central Love can we doubt, when it is radiant in so many faces, stretches to us in so many hands, runs to help us in so many feet, softens in so many tones? *Where did all that tenderness originate?* If the God were in the engine rushing on, here he is in the heart-love rushing out. If he were in Chicago's stormy burning, he was in the sympathy that rose like flame and swept like wind across two continents

to heal the wounded and comfort the broken-hearted. If he were in the steamship shuddering on the rock, he is in the shudder of sorrow with which we read of it pinioned there. If he is in the force of gravitation which bears the little bird to the ground, he is in us who find it and are pitiful.

Browning has said it all in the swelling close of his poem, his symphony, of "Saul:"—

"Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the end, what Began?
Would *I* fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt *He* alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
. . . Oh, speak through me now!
Would *I* suffer for him that I love? *So would'st Thou —so wilt Thou!"*

This is the swift reason for the faith. Our other two reasons travel through the mind to reach the heart. This comes the short way through the heart to find the mind. Hence arise saint-worships everywhere. Hence the Jesus-worship. Hence all of us make God man-like. No man but sees and uses mediators through whom, for him, the Soul of the universe looks out.

"For Mercy has a human heart,
  Pity a human face,
And Love the human form divine,
  And Peace the human dress.

"Then every man of every clime,
  Who prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
  Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace."

When such a mediator dies, the whole invisible side of things grows real and close and tender to us, because *he* has enriched it with his own rich self. If such a mediator perish by what we call a "tragedy," its accident and horror vanish, because his goodness blots out of mind the possibility of Nature's wronging *him*, his tenderness denies that Nature harbors malice, his thoughtfulness for others makes foolish the thought of her forgetting the sore hearts and maimed lives he leaves behind. The nobler, then, the victim, the more fearful the horror that engulfs him may become, and still the heart abide in peace. Such martyrs make their "tragedies" mankind's consummate arguments for goodness at the heart of things. The storm is grand, but let a man stand quiet in it waiting for his wave, and there is something grander than the storm, convincing us that at the center of the universe there is more than physical momentum; and we begin to call the storm the swinging of the sea-gate to the heaven to let a "man" pass through! Let one like Jesus die, and the world draws from his tomb a strengthened faith in immortality, from his failure on the earth assurance of a necessary

triumph in the skies, from the agony of his cross its supreme illustration of the love of God! Let *any* noble and dear one die, and death becomes a sudden beauty near us, — a glow, and not a shadow, on the day! For that moment, at least, we can talk of translations and transfigurations with child-like faith,— knowing no whit more about the life unseen than when groping in our arguments, yet happy and triumphant in a fearless ignorance. There was goodness in those burning cars, there was love and self-sacrifice upon that wreck,— where were they the minute after? Within the "horror" somewhere. Then it was *no* horror! The "accident" had closed around and hidden them. Then it was *no* accident! They would have put soul into the waves, soul into the flames, had there been none there before. To account for that in-tiding soul we can but think that the Father of Souls, as well as of waves and flames, was there from the beginning.

But now you turn this reason round and ask, "If good men prove that God is good, why are not bad men equal proofs that God is bad and Nature cruel?" I cannot tell, unless that thought which showed the world's disorder to be order-in-the-making holds again the answer. I think it does hold the answer; — that bad men *are* good men in the making; and that man's perception of this truth explains why increasingly the generations argue from good man to good God, and decreasingly from evil men to Devil. Bad men often prosper in their evil plans and good men fail in their good plans, yet increasingly we feel that "no good thing is failure, and no evil

thing success"; increasingly we expect the bad to be overtaken and overthrown; expect the moral law to vindicate its majesty, if not in men's obedience then by their doom; expect goodness to triumph in centuries, if not in years, and always in the end. It shows how deep in man this faith in right and goodness is; and how, though we can give reasons towards the faith, the faith is really deeper than all reasons.

IV

THAN all, at least, except perhaps the last, which now I add. Subtler this than any other; closer to the inmost consciousness; in truth, less a "reason" for the faith than the very method that generates the faith.— It is a simple fact that faith in Nature's goodness grows in proportion as we are good ourselves. Be thou dutiful,— the Whole seems duty-full! from rose-buds opening, to boilers bursting; from planets coursing evenly for ages, to that star which, a few years ago, glowed bright and brighter and then waned again, while astronomers explained that the hydrogen of a mighty sun was in a sudden conflagration! and the thought flashed, What of its planets and the life on them? "*All* looking dutiful to us, because our little human heart is so?" Yes, that is the simple fact, explain it how we may: be tender, loving, brotherly, and all things seem full of love, — so full that we as little doubt a Father in the agony as in the joy. Wonderful the benediction and the triumph of such trust!

I know that there are noble men and women who will deny this word, averring that to them that benediction has not come. They say, "To us the universe seems evil; life under life's conditions is no justification of birth." I dare to challenge their denial as mis-report of their own faith. I appeal from the puzzle of their mind to the daily and instinctive gladness of their heart as truer witness of the real faith that possesses them. In a universe which *really* seemed to them to be either a certain or a doubtful hell, could such as *they* rise glad when morning came, and sink to sleep in peace? Such as *they* feel joy in living, loving, in a world despaired of, or under any possibilities of curse? That joy is token that they *do* feel the benediction that I mean, and that their inner experience, interpreted aright, chimes with the faith of all the great obeyers, helpers, trusters,— those who have felt and said, and taught us to feel and say, that the universe is a Father's Home, and all the creatures children in it. Jesus' word for such faith was, "The sparrow does not fall without your Father." Paul put it, "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, yet not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed! *Nothing* can separate us from the love of God!" Not less unfalteringly do others of the mighty trusters, neither Jew nor Christian, cry, "No evil can befall a good man, whether he be alive or dead!" or, "What can I, an old lame man, do but sing hymns to God? Since I am a man, my mission is to praise God; and this I do. Nor shall I ever, so far as in me

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I know that there are noble men and women who will deny this word, averring that to them that benediction has not come. They say, "To us the universe seems evil; life under life's conditions is no justification of birth." I dare to challenge their denial as mis-report of their own faith. I appeal from the puzzle of their mind to the daily and instinctive gladness of their heart as truer witness of the real faith that possesses them. In a universe which *really* seemed to them to be either a certain or a doubtful hell, could such as *they* rise glad when morning came, and sink to sleep in peace? Such as *they* feel joy in living, loving, in a world despaired of, or under any possibilities of curse? That joy is token that they *do* feel the benediction that I mean, and that their inner experience, interpreted aright, chimes with the faith of all the great obeyers, helpers, trusters,— those who have felt and said, and taught us to feel and say, that the universe is a Father's Home, and all the creatures children in it. Jesus' word for such faith was, "The sparrow does not fall without your Father." Paul put it, "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, yet not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed! *Nothing* can separate us from the love of God!" Not less unfalteringly do others of the mighty trusters, neither Jew nor Christian, cry, "No evil can befall a good man, whether he be alive or dead!" or, "What can I, an old lame man, do but sing hymns to God? Since I am a man, my mission is to praise God; and this I do. Nor shall I ever, so far as in me

lies, desert my post. And I call on all to join me in this song of praise."

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[No. 265]

LIGHT ON BIBLE TEXTS

BY

JOHN PAGE HOPPS

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OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

LIGHT ON BIBLE TEXTS

I. Passages usually quoted to prove the doctrine of 'The Trinity'

(1) *Let us make man in our image.*— GEN. i. 26. *God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us.*— GEN. iii. 22.

All good Hebrew grammars tell us that 'words that express dominion, dignity, majesty, are commonly put in the plural.' Thus in Gen. xxiv. 9, 10, and 51, the word 'master' in the Hebrew is *plural* throughout, showing Abraham's dignity, and not Abraham's Trinity. So also in Gen. xxxix. 2, 3, 7, 8, 16, 19, 20, when Potiphar, the officer of Pharaoh, is called 'master,' the Hebrew word is in the plural, to show his dignity. Pharaoh also is called 'lords,' and Joseph, when called 'a lord,' has in the Hebrew the plural 'lords.' It was quite common, then, to use the plural for the singular to express dignity and honor, even as it is with us; the plural pronoun carrying no idea of plurality of *persons* in such cases, for example, 'We, George, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain and Ireland.'

(2) *Baptizing them in the name of the Father*

and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.— MATT. xxviii. 19.

Here we have, not the Trinity of three Gods in one, but a very different thing, a simple mention made of a Father who is God, of a son who is therefore *not* God, and of a spirit which, as God's own Spirit, he himself sheds abroad in the hearts of his children. The mystery is of man's making.

(3) *And ye receive not our witness.*— JOHN iii. 11.

If passages like this were not actually quoted, it would be difficult to believe that anyone could cite them as evidence.

(4) *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*— EPH. ii. 18.

This affirms the beautiful truth, that we come to God *through* Christ, in and by the one Spirit of God shed abroad in all our hearts. It says nothing about the curious theological puzzle of the Trinity.

(5) *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.*— II COR. xiii. 14.

See number 2.

(6) *The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name.*—JOHN xiv. 26.

See number 4.

(7) *The Spirit beareth witness.*—I JOHN v. 6.

We also thank God for his own blessed Spirit (not a second divine person), who beareth witness with our spirit (not a second human person). The Spirit of God *is* God, even as the spirit of man is man.

(8) *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.*—I JOHN v. 7.

These words are given up by every scholar as one of the most evident interpolations. Ever since the time of Luther they have been regarded with suspicion, and now men of all parties utterly give them up as words that are not to be found in the really ancient and reliable copies of this Epistle.[1] The Revised Version has dropped the passage: not a vestige of it is left.

[1] Dr. Pye Smith, the well-known Independent, and a scholarly orthodox writer, confessed frankly that the probability is that 'the passage was originally a marginal comment, and was introduced *by the ignorance or the predilection* of translators into the text of the vulgate Latin version. Dr. Wardlaw, who wrote bitterly against us, acknowledged nevertheless, that these words were not genuine. Dr. Adam Clarke admits that they are only to be found in *one* manuscript out of the 113 extant in his time; this one being 'a comparatively recent one'; and the *Eclectic Review*, an orthodox publication, once said, 'We are unspeakably ashamed that

II. Passages usually quoted to prove the separate personality of the 'Holy Spirit'

See John xiv. 26; II Peter i. 21; Acts xiii. 2; Heb. vi. 4; Matt. xii. 28; Acts xiii. 4; Luke ii. 26; Luke iii. 16, I Cor. iii. 16; I Cor. vi. 19; I Cor. ii. 13; John xiv. 17, 26; Rev. xiv. 13; Acts v. 32; I John iii. 24; Rom. viii. 26.

Now of all these texts I have only one thing to say: I grant all that is affirmed as to the personality (and I may add the *Deity*) of the Holy Spirit. I so firmly believe in the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, that I cannot find room for any other Deity. 'God is a Spirit,' and we can find no room for any other: for, as the apostle so gloriously puts it, 'It is *the same God* which worketh all in all' (I Cor. xii. 6). Is anyone not satisfied with the Spirit of God our Father shed abroad in the heart?

any modern divines should have fought for the retention of a passage so *indisputably spurious*.' The same review goes on to call the words 'a gross interpolation.' Bishop Middleton said, years ago, that 'in the rejection of the controverted passage, learned and good men are now, for the most part agreed; and I contemplate, with admiration and delight,' said he, 'the gigantic exertions of intellect which have established this acquiescence.' Here, moreover, are these facts; that the words are not to be found in any ancient manuscripts of the Testament, that Luther would not admit them into his translation of the Scripture, that they were marked as doubtful in the Bibles of Henry VIII and other editions that followed, and that they have been condemned by Sir Isaac Newton, Archbishop Newcombe, Bishop Lowth, John Locke, Bishop Marsh, John Milton, and a host of others, followed now by the universal judgment of competent scholars.

III. Passages usually quoted to prove the 'Deity' of Christ

(1) *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*— Is. vii. 14; MATT. i. 23.

Immanuel means in Hebrew, 'God with us'; and the text is therefore quoted to prove Christ was God. But Elijah means in Hebrew, 'God the lord.' Was Elijah 'God the lord,' then? Elihu means 'my God himself.' Was Elihu 'God himself'? But the child, to be called Immanuel, was to be born in the prophet's time, and it was to be for a sign of events to be fulfilled in his days. See Is. vii. 16. The word translated 'virgin' means young woman or young wife — probably the prophet's own wife, or, as some think, the king's. See Chapter viii. 3, 4.

(2) *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.*— Is. ix. 6.

The reference here is to some great warrior or mighty prince who lived in Isaiah's time, as anyone may see who will read the chapter through. The phrase 'mighty god,' *whatever it means,* applied to this warrior or prince, and yet, surely, he was not God. For the use of the word

'god' see number 33. The verse in Isaiah had nothing to do with Christ originally, and, when applied to Christ, it ought not to be made to carry with it more than its old meaning. But, indeed, it can only be figuratively applied to him at all.

(3) *That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*— MATT. i. 20.

This does not say anything about the Deity of Christ.

(4) *Jesus said unto him (the devil), thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*— MATT. iv. 7.

Christ is here saying —'You ask me to tempt God by presumptuous conduct, in casting myself down to try him. I may not tempt God my Father so.'

(5) *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee (Mary), and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God.*— LUKE i. 35.

This verse says Christ was '*the son* of God.' But this is a very different thing from the unscriptural and bewildering invention of a 'God the Son.'

(6) *In the beginning was the word, and the word*

was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.— JOHN i. 1-3.[1]

Yes, the word *was* God, for when God speaks he sends forth, not speech like man, but his own creative energy. Hence the point of verse 2 which asserts that 'the word' was 'with God.' That statement implies a distinction between 'the word' and God. All things *were* made by 'the word' of God, and *Christ* also was made by that 'word.' See verse 14. He also is 'begotten of God'; and that is how we know that he was not God himself. God's 'word' is God's own creative energy and life — himself — and *that* was 'in the beginning' ('with God,' and only in a secondary sense 'God') and it dwelt in Christ, just as it will dwell in us, in so far as we seek to be like Christ.

(7) *And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.*— JOHN i. 14.

See number 6. 'Only-begotten' was a Hebrew superlative. But how could 'the only-begotten' of God be himself God?

[1] See the whole passage fully explained in the Author's *Jesus Christ the son of God, not God the Son.*

(8) *The only-begotten son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*— JOHN i. 18.

Here again Christ is *the son* of God. He is '*in the bosom*' of God. He 'declares' or reveals God, and therefore he is not God.

(9) *Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was I am.*— JOHN viii. 58.

This says nothing as to the Deity of Christ. But if anyone says Christ really existed before Abraham, then I affirm that he was really crucified on Calvary before Abraham. Turn to Rev. xiii. 8, where you may read these words: 'The Lamb *slain from the foundation of the world.*' How was Christ *slain* from the foundation of the world? If anyone will tell me that, I will tell him how Christ *existed* from the foundation of the world. But the difficulty is only a fog raised by the creeds, and we may come into clear daylight if we will. There is no future with God, and no past. He sees the end from the beginning. It is even said that *we* as believers were chosen 'before the foundation of the world.' But Peter gives the key to it all, when he says that Christ 'was *foreordained* before the foundation of the world, but was *manifest* in these last times.' (I Peter i. 20.) The truth, then, is — Christ existed and suffered in God's mind, even as we believed and were saved in God's thought, before the foundation of the world. That ex-

plains how Christ could be '*slain* before the foundation of the world.' It explains also how Christ could exist before Abraham. But even though he did personally and actually exist before he came to earth, how does that prove him to be the Eternal God? — especially when he himself said, '*I came from God,*' and '*God sent me.*' See John viii. 42.

(10) *I and my Father are one.*— JOHN x. 30.

Was Christ God because he and his Father were one? Then each of the disciples was God, for Christ said of them —' I pray that they may be one *in us.*' Nay, according to this, John was James, and Peter was Philip, and any one of them was all of them; for Christ says —' I pray *that they may be one* EVEN AS we are one.' How were the disciples to be one? Tell me that, and I will tell you how God and Christ were one. But let anyone turn to the verse itself, and read what goes before and what comes after, and it will then be seen that Christ is saying: ' No man can pluck my sheep out of my hands, for my Father who gave them to me is very strong, and he can defend them and me too. My Father *gave me* these sheep to tend, and I am one with him in caring for them, and he is one with me in keeping them. I am not alone, therefore; but my Father is with me, one with me in the safe-tending of his sheep and mine.' Is not that the plain meaning of the passage? Is it not exactly what Christ says?

(11) *The Jews answered him, saying, for a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*— JOHN x. 33.

I do not recognize, as authorities, the blind Jews who stoned Jesus, especially when I find that Jesus contradicted and corrected them directly after this, when he said (only three verses on) 'I said I am *the son* of God,' thus actually denying that he made himself God.

(12) *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.* — JOHN xiv. 9.

That is just what the King's representatives say in India, in America, in France — everywhere. They represent him, they speak for him, they claim the respect and attention due to him. Their word is not their own, but it is the word of the King that sent them. This is exactly how Jesus speaks: 'I can do nothing of myself.' (John v. 19.) 'The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.' (John xiv. 24.) In the very next verse Jesus says —'The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.' What he says is really this:— He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, because I speak his words and do his works. Even those who believe in the Trinity do not identify Christ with 'the Father.' He is set forth as a 'second person,' and to confound him with 'the Father' would be fatal to the Trinity. So, then, from every point of view, 'He that hath seen me hath

seen the Father' cannot be taken literally, but *must* mean — He that hath seen me hath seen the Father's messenger, son, and servant. Besides, how could he be the Father when throughout his life, he referred everything to the Father, and, in his death, said —'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit'?

(13) *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*— JOHN xiv. 11.

Was Christ God because the Father was in him? Then each of the disciples was Christ, for Christ said to them —'I am in my Father, and ye in me, and *I in you.*' Thus, according to Christ himself, God was in Christ *as he is in us.*

(14) *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*— JOHN xvii. 5.

See number 9. At all events, Christ is here seen to be not God, but a son praying to God.

(15) *We have a law (said the Jews), and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the son of God.*— JOHN xix. 7.

Here again Christ is called '*the son* of God.' But see number 11. If the Jews misunderstood Christ, why should we accept their misunderstanding rather than his own explanation?

(16) *And Thomas answered and said to him (Jesus), My Lord and my God.*— JOHN xx. 28.

If poor, bewildered, hasty, unbelieving Thomas meant to say here that Christ was really God, Christ himself supplies the correction of his error. See a few verses before this, where Christ plainly says, 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' The God of Thomas, then, was the God of Christ. Could words be plainer? But I do not think Thomas really meant to say that he deliberately looked upon Christ as the very God. His was rather the astonished cry of one overwhelmed with wonder. But, at all events, Christ was, and is, a better authority than this poor, fickle disciple.

(17) *He is Lord of all.*— ACTS x. 36.

If this refers to Christ, it says nothing concerning his Deity. But look only two verses on. There we find it stated that '*God anointed* Jesus of Nazareth,' and that 'God was with him.' How then can Christ be God?

(18) *Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*— ROMANS ix. 5.

This reading is given up by the best Greek scholars. The Revised Version gives nearly half

a column of various readings, and all of these translate the clause as a kind of doxology such as Paul was fond of interposing as a cry of joy and thankfulness. Here, at the mention of God's gift of Christ, he says —'God, who is over all, be blessed for ever. Amen.' Just as we should say —'Christ came, God be praised!' But how can Christ be the ever-blessed God, when he himself calls his Father 'the only true God,' and says of him, 'My Father is greater than I'?

(19) *Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*— I Cor. ii. 8.

'Lord of glory' is a common Hebraism for *glorious Lord.* But see I Peter i. 21, where we learn that *God* 'gave him glory.'

(20) *The second man is the Lord from heaven.* — I Cor. xv. 47.

This says nothing concerning the Deity of Christ. Even though the meaning be that Christ existed in heaven before he came to earth, this has no relation to his Deity. The pre-existence of Christ does not involve the Deity of Christ. The Revised Version omits the words 'the Lord' and reads 'the second man is of heaven.' It is a contrast between the earthly and the heavenly condition of man.

(21) *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*— II Cor. v. 19.

But, plainly, if God was *in* Christ, God was a different being from Christ. But look at I Cor. xiv. 25, and Eph. iv. 6. It is there very plainly stated by the same apostle that God is in every true believer. Christ also says of himself, that God his Father is in him (John xiv. 10); but he immediately adds, '*ye are in me, and I in you,*' and that makes the truth as clear as a sunbeam. How is Christ in us? That, says Christ, is how God my Father is in me.

(22) *When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son made of a woman.* — GAL. iv. 4.

This again affirms just what I am saying, that Christ is God's son, not God the Son; and that God sent him.

(23) *Who (Jesus Christ), being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*— PHIL. ii. 6.

By taking the verse as it stands, we lose all the significance of the passage. The apostle is speaking of humility, and this is the drift of what he says: Let this mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ, who though so gifted by God as to be the 'brightness of his Father's glory,' still did not presume upon this, by attempting to appropriate to himself that which belonged to God, who had sent him, and whose son and servant he was: but made himself as nothing, and

humbled himself. Is not that the plain meaning of the verse? One of the best translations in the world renders it —' Let this mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ, who, being in the form of God, thought not the being as God a thing to be seized, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a slave,' etc. That is intelligible, and connects one verse naturally with another. But if we read it that Christ made himself equal with God, we introduce something quite opposed to the lesson the apostle is here enforcing concerning humility: and besides this, how shall we escape from the contradiction of an apostle saying 'Christ made himself *equal* with God,' and Christ himself saying, 'My Father is *greater* than I'? Both cannot be correct as they stand. The Revised Version partly adopts the view here given. In any case, the verse is an extremely puzzling one. What, for instance, is the meaning of 'in the form of God'?

(24) *He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.*— PHIL. ii. 7.

Christ *was* made 'in the likeness of men': but there is no suggestion of his Deity.

(25) *His dear son, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth,*

> *visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*— COL. i. 15-17.

The apostle is speaking here of spiritual things *in the Church,* as anyone may see who will read the next few words: —'He is the head of the body, the Church.' At all events Christ is here again called, not God the son, but *the son of God:* the 'image' of God, and therefore not God himself. But whatever mystical place in the work of creation the writer may have given to Christ, that place is clearly a subordinate one; for he calls him 'the first-born,' 'the image of the invisible God,' and his 'son' in whom dwelt 'all fulness,' because 'it pleased the Father' (see verse 19, etc.). Instead of 'by him were all things created,' the Revised Version reads '*in* him,' etc. Instead of 'all things were created by him,' it reads 'all things have been created through him.' Instead of 'by him all things consist,' it reads '*in* him all things consist.'

> (26) *For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*— COL. ii. 9.

Notice what it says a few verses before (chapter i. 19); —'*It pleased the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell.' Now, if it pleased God to fill Christ with his fulness, it should be

clear even to a child that Christ could not himself be the God who so filled him. But refer to Eph. iii. 19, where every one may see that the same apostle calls upon *us* to 'be filled with all the fulness of God.' That shows what the verse means.

(27) *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our savior, and Lord Jesus Christ.*— I TIM. i. 1.

Two persons are clearly mentioned here.

(28) *Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.*— I TIM. iii. 16.

This verse is, by the best scholars (and by the Revised Version), rendered differently ('*He* who was,' instead of 'God was'), but I am quite willing to take it as it stands. *We* also believe that God revealed or manifested himself in Jesus; and therefore he who was revealed was not the same being as he who revealed him. But does anyone really mean to say that Christ is called God in this verse? Look, then, at the previous chapter (verse 5), and see how the same writer will answer him: —'There is one God, and one mediator between God and men — the man Christ Jesus.' Is not that sufficient? And yet, after all, there is a sense in which it is true that God is 'manifest in the flesh': — *is,* and not only 'was.'

(29) *The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us.*— TITUS ii. 13, 14.

Two persons are clearly mentioned here. See previous. The Revised Version, however, merges the two persons in one, in a way that will probably startle even those who are accustomed to call Jesus *God.*

(30) *God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, etc. When he (God) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.*— HEB. i. 2, 3, 6.

Here again Christ is said to be what *we* say he was — not God the son, but *the son* of God. The translation 'made the *worlds*' is probably incorrect. A literal translation is, 'made (or appointed) the *ages.*' The Revised Version gives that reading in the margin, as the Greek. But whatever the meaning of the writer, one thing is clear — that God here 'appoints' Christ; that he makes him 'heir'; that he creates or does things '*by*' him, or, as the Revised Version reads, '*through*' him; that he sets Christ forth as a 'brightness of his glory,' and an 'image of his

person,' etc.— all of which is plainly incompatible with Christ's *Deity.*

(31) *Unto the son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*— HEB. i. 8.

This is a quotation from Ps. xlv. 6. The reference there is to some great prince — probably Solomon; and the word translated '*god*' means 'mighty one.' That it does not mean the Almighty is evident from the next verse, both in the Psalm and the Epistle, where we find that the person addressed as a 'god' is himself said to have a god. The word is applied to Moses (Ex. vii. 1), 'See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.' Was Moses the Almighty? It is also applied to judges (Ps. lxxxii. 1 and 6). Read the whole Psalm, and see how God himself calls human judges 'gods.' The same Hebrew word is actually translated 'judges' in Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, etc. If, then, this text proves that Christ was the Almighty God, the passages here quoted prove that Solomon, Moses, and others were the same. Let who will refer to John x. 33, 36, for Christ's own statement of what I have said about the use of the word 'god' in ancient times. But the writer of this Epistle, though he does not make use of vague and florid Old Testament passages, furnishes abundant evidence that he regarded Christ as subordinate to God. See chapter i. 2; iii. 2 v. 3; xii. 2.

(32) *Through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*— II PETER i. 1.

Two persons are here mentioned — God our Father and Jesus Christ his son our saviour. Paul also speaks 'of Christ and of God,' two distinct and separate persons (see Eph. v. 5).

(33) *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? Whosoever denieth the son, the same hath not the Father.*— I JOHN ii. 22, 23.

We do receive the son, but we know not what they do who lose the son by confounding him with God.

(34) *We are in him that is true, even in his son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*— I JOHN v. 20.

Refer to John xvii. 1-3, where Christ, speaking to his God and Father, says, 'This is life eternal, that they might know THEE, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' A careful reader will see that the phrase 'true God' refers to him of whom it is said that Christ is his *son*. But, at all events, when Christ himself says that his Father is 'the only true God,' we must submit to his decision.

(35) *Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*— JUDE 4.

Two persons are clearly mentioned here. The

Revised Version reads, 'Denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.'

(36) *The only wise God our Saviour.*— JUDE 25.

God is often called a saviour as well as Christ. The Revised Version, after the words 'God our Saviour,' reads 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

(37) *Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*— TITUS ii. 10.

See numbers 32 and 36.

(38) *The kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.*— TITUS iii. 4.

See numbers 32 and 36.

(39) *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*— REV. xxii. 13.

This says nothing about the Deity of Christ. Nay, it says the very opposite, if the speaker here is Christ; for, if we look four verses back, we see that the very same being who said this *denied* that he was God, and would not let John worship him, but said, 'See thou do it not, for *I am thy fellow-servant,* and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book: — worship God.'

I have now examined all or nearly all the pas-

sages usually quoted to prove the Deity of Christ. I will not in turn quote isolated passages to prove that Christ was God's *son,* sent by God, taught by God, protected by God, beloved by God. I will not quote texts to show how Christ prayed to God, how he ever acknowledged God as the source of all his power, and the object of all his reverent and adoring love. I will only ask the candid reader to take up the New Testament, and see whether the Gospels are not positively thronged with proofs that Christ was a distinct being — himself a servant of God, a son of God, a worshiper of God. It may be that a few passages, such as those I have quoted, want a little light thrown upon them, but they are like specks upon the sun: — the full blaze of day lighting up everywhere the life of Christ as the life of one who bends his knees with ours before a Being whom he teaches us to call 'Our Father,' and of whom he says, he is 'my Father and your Father, my God and your God.' Anything beyond this only plunges us into the thick fogs and the bewildering mazes of the creeds, which, thank God, have nearly had their day.

IV. Passages usually quoted to prove the doctrine of 'The Atonement'; or Salvation by the punishment of Christ in our stead

(1) *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in*

him should not perish, but have everlasting life.— JOHN iii. 16.

What has this to do with the death of Christ as a victim, suffering our punishment at the hands of God? God's *love* is here affirmed, not God's vengeance.

(2) *The Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.*— ACTS xx. 28.

There is something so shocking in the idea of 'the blood of God,' that we may readily suppose it would be a relief to anyone to see that the 'he' refers to Christ, or that the word 'God' should be Lord, as many very learned men think, and many ancient MSS. say. But as to Christ purchasing the Church of God with his blood, every one can see the difference between a Christ who died in the path of duty and in the way of love, and a Christ who died as a victim trembling and dying in the hands of an angry God whom he appeased. Christ *did* die for us. So do courageous missionaries die for the heathen, when they brave the horrors of the dark places of the earth. And do we not say of the fathers who have gone before us, that they purchased our liberties with their pains and blood? But to suppose that Christ paid his pains and blood as a 'price' to God, before God would forgive us, is something too dreadful for belief. The Revised Version, in the margin, says of the word 'God,' 'Many ancient authorities read *the Lord.*'

(3) *That he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*— ROM. iii. 26.

This is only a fragment of a glorious sentence. The text says, '*That* he might be just,' etc. *What* does God do, 'that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus'? The whole of the chapter tells us. God has justified men by his grace. He has set forth his righteousness; and now, by making men righteous in Christ, he is at the same time just and the justifier of the believer. For if he forgave us in any other way than by healing us, he would not be just. It is not God who is *paid* for our pardon, then, but it is the sinner who is cleansed — justified by being made truly just.

(4) *We were reconciled to God by the death of his son.*— ROM. v. 10.

This is a precious truth, but it is not the doctrine taught by those who say Christ's pains and blood and death reconciled our God *to us.* The truth here stated by the apostle is the very opposite of this.

(5) *Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*— ROM. v. 8, 9.

The words that go before tell us of God who

'*commendeth his love towards us,*' and the verse that comes after tells of our being reconciled to God. Yes! Christ's death does justify us; but it justifies us by leading us with repentant hearts to God, that we may ask and receive his forgiving love. Christ's 'blood' is here and elsewhere put for his self-denying death: and that death 'justifies' us, not by its being a price paid to God for his mercy, but by winning us from our sins to follow Christ in his holy and self-sacrificing way to God.

(6) *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*— II Cor. v. 19.

Yes. God did not need to be reconciled to the world: it was the world that needed to be reconciled to God.

(7) *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.*— II Cor. v. 21.

This cannot mean that God regarded Christ as a sinner, that he might punish him as one. The word 'sin' here means a victim to sin—a being sharing the sad consequences of sin, and entering into the sorrowful lot which is the result of sin. And this Christ indeed was, when sin discharged upon him the torrent of its ignorance and hate. God did not destroy him, but sin did; and God 'made him' to be what he was, only as every one who takes upon him any of the sorrows and burdens of the world may be said

to be 'devoted' thereto—ay! and by the loving Father of us all.

(8) *In Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.* — EPH. ii. 13.

The same truth again. *We* are made nigh; and yet men tell us *God* was brought nigh—satisfied by an offering of blood!

(9) *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*— COL. i. 14; [EPH. i. 7].

The previous verse shows the meaning of this, where we are told that Christ 'hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of God's dear son.' What a different redemption that is from the one which consists in deliverance *from the wrath* of an inexorable God!

(10) *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*— I PETER iii. 18.

So amongst men now, the just often suffer for the unjust, not by way of punishment, but by way of sympathy and self-denial and service: and this is how Christ suffered for us. He was not punished in our stead, but he suffered in our behalf. But this very verse tells us that

Christ suffered, not to appease or satisfy God, but '*to bring us to God.*'

(11) *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*— I TIM. i. 15.

Yes. He came 'to save sinners' *from sin,* not from an angry God who punished an innocent Christ in our stead.

(12) *Jesus gave himself a ransom for all.*—I TIM. ii. 6.

So he did: 'to redeem us from all iniquity' as the same apostle says (Titus ii. 14) and not from the hands of an angry God. See number 3.

(13) *Without shedding of blood is no remission.* HEB. ix. 22.

This is spoken of the old Jewish economy. But Christ brings in the better way. See the very next chapter, verses 4, 8, 9, etc.

(14) *He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*—HEB. ix. 26.

See number 10.

(15) *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as sil-*

ver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ.—I PETER i. 18, 19.

'Redeemed,' yes; but from what? 'Redeemed,' says the apostle, '*from your vain conversation* ("vain manner of life," says the Revised Version), received by tradition from your fathers.' Yes, that was what Christ redeemed us from: not from God's wrath and punishment, but from sin, and folly, and superstition, and old traditions and unrealities that had turned to dust and ashes in men's hands.

(16) *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*— I PETER ii. 24.

Peter tells us here that Christ bore our sins — took upon himself in generous sympathy, and even in suffering, the burden of our sins — what for?—to purchase our pardon from God by his pains? Nothing of the kind; but that we might 'live unto righteousness, and be *healed* by his stripes'; 'for,' says he, 'ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.' What a different doctrine that is from that of a suffering Christ dying to appease or pay or satisfy an offended God!

(17) *The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin.*—I JOHN i. 7.

Yes, 'cleanseth us from all sin'; for when we

see this holy suffering Jesus, our hearts are touched, and we are ashamed of our selfish sinning, and we hate the sin that slew him. For God did not slay him, but man; and he died, the victim of human hate, not of divine vengeance punishing him in our stead.

(18) *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell: and (having made peace through the blood of his cross), by him to reconcile all things unto himself.*— COL. i. 19, 20.

See number 17.

Other passages are sometimes quoted, but what I have said will apply to those that remain, and, in closing my examination of this list, I can only rejoice that everything is bright with the promise that the so-called orthodox doctrine is becoming unbearable even to the orthodox — that many of the most intelligent of them hear the old dogmas, but no longer believe in an angry God who punished the innocent Christ, and satisfied his claims with that poor victim's pains and death and blood.

V. Passages usually quoted to prove the reality of an eternal 'Hell,' or Everlasting Torments

Luke xvi. 23; Matt. x. 28; II Peter ii. 4, 9; Matt. xxv. 41; John v. 28, 29; Mark ix. 43, 44; II Peter iii. 7, etc. Respecting the whole of

these I have only one thing to say; — I love God too well, and believe too firmly in his justice, goodness, truth, and power, to cherish for a moment the horrible belief that he has created an eternal hell wherein to torture forever myriads of his children whom he either could not or would not save. I believe that God is everywhere, and that he is therefore in the place of punishment, wherever that may be. And if he is there, he is there with all his infinite perfections — perfect justice, perfect goodness, perfect truth, perfect love, and perfect power. And therefore I know that Sin cannot triumph forever in the eternal damnation of a single soul. I do not admit that these texts or any others positively teach the everlasting suffering of 'the lost,' but this I say, that if an angel from heaven came to me and told me what orthodoxy teaches me about God's eternal hate and Hell's eternal misery, I would not believe him. I will trust God before all the texts on earth and all the angels in heaven.

VI. Plain Words that need no comment, and that can only mean one thing

Isaiah xliv. 6.—'Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel —"I am the first, and I am the last; and BESIDE ME THERE IS NO GOD."'

Isaiah xliii. 10.—'Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.'

Isaiah xlv. 22.—'I am God, and THERE IS NONE ELSE.'

Isaiah xlii. 8.—'I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another.'

Isaiah xxxvii. 16.—'O Lord of hosts, God of Israel — thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.'

Deut. vi. 4.—'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is ONE LORD.'

Deut. xxxii. 39.—'I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me.'

Psalm lxxxvi. 10.—'Thou art God alone.'

Mark xii. 32.—'There is one God, and there is none other but he.'

Gal. iii. 20.—'God is one.'

Mark x. 18.—'JESUS SAID, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God."'

John xiv. 28.—'My Father is greater than I.'

Mark xvi. 19.—'After the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and SAT AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.'

I Cor. xi. 3.—'The head of every man is Christ — and THE HEAD OF CHRIST IS GOD.'

I Cor. viii. 6.—'To us there is BUT ONE GOD, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.'

Eph. i. 17.—'THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.'

1 Cor. iii. 23.—'Ye are Christ's and CHRIST IS GOD'S.'

Eph. iv. 6.—'There is ONE GOD and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'

I Cor. xv. 28.—'THEN SHALL THE SON ALSO HIMSELF BE SUBJECT unto him that put all things under him, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.'

I Peter i. 3.—'Blessed be the GOD AND FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Heb. i. 1, 2.—'God — hath in these last days spoken unto us BY HIS SON WHOM HE HATH APPOINTED heir of all things.'

I Tim. ii. 5.—'There is ONE GOD, and one mediator between God and men, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.'

John xvii. 3.—'These words spake Jesus — This is life eternal, that they might know THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ WHOM THOU HAST SENT.'

Luke vi. 12.—'He (Jesus) went out into the mountain to pray, and continued all night IN PRAYER TO GOD.'

John v. 30.—'I can of mine own self do nothing.— I seek not mine own will, but the will of the FATHER WHO SENT ME.'

Acts ii. 22.—'Jesus of Nazareth, A MAN APPROVED OF GOD among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, WHICH GOD DID BY HIM.'

Acts x. 38.—'GOD ANOINTED Jesus of Nazareth — God was with him.'

Matt. xxvii. 46.—'MY GOD, MY GOD, why hast thou forsaken me?'

I Peter i. 21.—'GOD RAISED HIM (Christ) from the dead AND GAVE HIM glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.'

John xx. 17.—'Jesus saith — I ascend unto MY FATHER, AND YOUR FATHER, AND TO MY GOD, AND YOUR GOD.'

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 266]

DEMOCRACY IN RELIGION

BY

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

DEMOCRACY IN RELIGION

Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? John 1:46.

It has been finely said that "Democracy means not 'I'm as good as you are,' but 'You're as good as I am.'" That recognizes the possible worth of all men and the right of all men to achieve their best. It does not assert special privileges for any; it concedes a common privilege for all. The worth of man — that is the true principle of democracy. It is rightly felt that men deserve liberty because on the whole and in the long run they will make a worthy use of it. They who oppose democracy do so because they distrust their fellow men and hold a low opinion of them. The belief in democracy means confidence in people. It places a high estimate on them.

Democracy is a growing force in the thought and life of the world. Modern history in its general drift is a series of lessons in human freedom. Men are fast learning that they are capable of governing themselves, and more and more they are insisting on doing so. In our new world we long since rid ourselves of the tyranny of non-representative government. Here the experiment of political democracy has been tried on an unprecedented scale, and in spite of shortcomings and dismal prophecies of failure it is proving largely successful.

And democracy in the political sphere is not

the only notable product of the modern spirit. The great movement in the sixteenth century has borne abundant fruit. The anniversary of Martin Luther's nailing his ninety-five theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg is a great date in the calendar. The spirit of the Reformation which threw off the yoke of the hierarchy is precisely the spirit of the American Revolution which from these shores waved to old-world monarchism a long farewell.

Furthermore, it is the logic of events and all in the spirit of this same democracy that the Reformation itself should be reformed and that the soul of man should break loose from the bondage of the letter in all respects and fashion for itself a fluid and unfettered expression of its expanding life. It is but a natural consequence of reformations and revolutions that the human mind should demand a free atmosphere of thought, and that the human spirit should rest content with nothing short of unbounded play and scope for all its energies.

Subjection to a creed becomes in time a worse tyranny than subjection to a church. The church is an organism; it grows and changes. The creed is a formula; it is rigid, and to generations succeeding that of its inception it represents the power of the dead hand. A creed is an explicit statement of certain theological doctrines. It may be a written statement in set terms such as the Apostles' Creed or the Westminster Confession, or it may be a verbal and informal statement. But in either case it definitely commits whoever professes it to whatever opinion it sets

forth. In its ordinary use as an instrument to define the terms of church fellowship, it binds the communicant to a loyal acceptance of its articles of belief. In practice, to be sure, the confession of the creed is apt in these days to be lightly passed over and minimized or even nullified. Nevertheless the legitimate office of the creed can be no other than that just described; and the minimizing or nullifying practice is simply a virtual protest against this office.

Now in the nature of the case a great many persons do not hold as their own the theological opinions set forth in any creed. So one effect of the creed-test is to keep all such persons as are alive to the issue and as deal squarely with it, out of the church that requires it.

The creed is not a free and varying expression of the fundamental principles of life and conduct that are acknowledged by the great body of men of sound sense and good will in all lands and throughout all times. It is a binding statement of doctrines that do not directly bear on life and conduct at all, and that bring out wide differences of opinion. Some of these doctrines are obsolete or rapidly becoming so; some are phrased in objectionable terms; all should be trusted to the free handling of the general mind. Creed-tests bring about separation and schism. They divide people into classes of believers and non-believers and put a stigma on the non-believers. This of course is misleading and injurious. The church ought to unite people of good will so that together they may work for a common good. No doubt there would still be many

differing points of view, but they would no longer be forced into unnatural and uncompromising antagonism. THEY would not be maintained as hard and fast distinctions between the elect and the lost. Every member of the general body would be free in his own belief and he could express it openly without incurring the reproach of heresy. The creed-test makes a cleavage along the line of mere opinion and so pushes excellent people apart and splits into ineffective fragments what might be a united, vigorous body of earnest workers. The creed is indifferent in its bearing on character. The emphasis is not laid on religion, where it belongs, but on mere opinion, where it has no business. For religion is of the marrow of the life; while opinion, even though it be opinion about religious matters, is by no means necessarily conclusive of the real intents and purposes of the heart; it may be rooted in these, but also it may and often does curiously contradict them.

There is no permanent reason why people who can live together in the same community and exchange kindly offices and make themselves mutually useful, should not worship and work together in the same church. We are not so particular about such other's theology in the ordinary affairs of life. You do not ask your physician what he thinks about the Trinity or the Atonement before you will let him treat you. It is enough for you that he is a good physician. You do not require a certificate of baptism from the man who builds your house. You only care to know that he is trustworthy and that he un-

derstands his business. Now if two persons can come to the point of agreeing that a certain hymn is a fitting utterance of religious feeling, it surely would not be stretching the point for them to sing it together in church, regardless of any differences they may have touching doctrinal matters. Those differences need not affect the singing in the least. People ought to be able to unite for the worship of the Highest and the service of man and the cultivation of the things that are just and true and of good report, without calling each other in question as to their several theories of faith. The church is the house of prayer. It seeks to nurture the best life of our common humanity. But a creed cataloguing the traditional dogmas is of no help here; rather is it a hindrance. The great sanctities of life are not embodied in the creed — not in any warm, human fashion. What men and women need in order to overcome temptations, to answer the questions that day by day confront them, to grow to the measure of their noblest ideals, is not a creed, but a constantly repeated renewal of spirit, a strengthening of moral purpose, perpetually new revealings of eternal truth, and a deepened sense of life's meaning and worth. The creed can give them nothing of all this; but they may not unreasonably hope to find what they need in the company of earnest souls that are pursuing the highest good in a common effort and aspiration of faith.

Creed-confession breeds a certain insincerity even in those who in most matters are sincere. Many subscribe to the creed who do not really

believe it fully, or possibly not at all, or who are utterly indifferent as to what the creed may contain, and subscribe to it as a mere formality. Nowadays at least, very few of those who profess acceptance of a creed do so because they have carefully pondered its doctrines. Indeed the more some of these doctrines are pondered, the less possible does it become for a candid mind to assent to them. They are like pills; the less you think about them, the easier it is to swallow them. We cannot force ourselves to believe. We believe certain things because we cannot help it. We doubt other things again because we cannot help it. There is no virtue per se either in believing or in doubting, but there is much virtue in being candid with ourselves and with each other and in being true to our own convictions.

The questions treated in creeds may properly be thought about and discussed, but it is assuredly a misuse of them to make them define the bonds of spiritual fellowship. The truth or the probability of doctrines must be decided, not by authority, but by reason. That is the court of final resort. The creeds themselves cannot escape this review; they are not outside the jurisdiction of this court. The mind cannot be true to itself, it cannot be true to the truth, unless it holds itself open to the consideration and reconsideration of every doctrinal question that engages its interest and ready to admit all the evidence and the facts that have a bearing on it. But the creed implicitly denies this. The creed says, "Believe, and don't raise questions." The creed is a set form closing all inquiry. It announces a decision

and forbids appeal. Therefore the valid ground of objection to creeds is that they operate to prevent the freedom of thought and so limit the progress of the mind in its search for truth. And this abridges the just liberty of the human soul. It denies the soul its birth-right of being led into all truth so far as its native capacity will permit. It would degrade us to be the subjects of a despotic rule, instead of raising us to the estate of children in our Father's house.

Now a free church, that is, a church whose members are not bound by the letter of a stated creed, is not a church that lays no foundation in faith. The absence of a creed does not mean the wiping out of all beliefs. The free church simply does not assume the function of prescribing beliefs. It leaves the question of what he shall believe where it belongs, that is in the keeping of the individual believer. The man who does the believing is the only rightful authority for what he believes. In point of fact everybody does have some kind of belief. That is his necessity; it is his privilege; it is his responsibility. Attempt to deprive him of this natural prerogative at your peril — and at his peril too. To call him in question concerning it is to attack him in the very citadel of his being. Democracy assumes that men are capable of self-government. That is its essential principle. It is as true in the religious sense as it is in the political sense. Any other construction is sheer ecclesiastical usurpation. Men are as capable of framing their own beliefs as they are of setting up their own governments. The carrying out of this principle

may encounter some inconveniences; it may now and then entail difficult re-adjustments; but that is all by the way. It has been pertinently said that the cure for democracy is more democracy. When the constituted authorities get at loggerheads, let the people decide; and if they don't decide right the first go, let them try it again, and yet again. In the end the right will prevail; and it will prevail by this method and by no other.

The free church means freedom of faith, and it means that out of the exercise of freedom there will grow a large faith. The members of a free church are believers. Taking them by and large, they believe much; their faith is deep and sincere. But nobody's belief, nor any general belief, is the test of fellowship. The free exercise of conscience and reason is a fundamental condition of the free church. Nobody's belief is forced; nobody is obliged to profess a belief that is not really his own. The members of a creedless church are severally entitled to hold any creed and as much or as little of it as represents their actual beliefs. So of course each one who enjoys this liberty must allow the same liberty to all the rest. You must not seek to impose your creed on your neighbor. Nobody is deprived of his creed; nobody is forced to accept the creed of another. And this tolerance is in every way reasonable and wholesome. It makes for harmony rather than for dissension; for in removing the clash of opinions from the arena of the church's administration all persons are brought together on the common ground of their good

will and their spiritual needs and communings and aspirations. Whoever helps the church and is helped by it therein shows himself a true member of the general body.

The man of good will and good sense may be trusted without being bound by a creed. And the greater our confidence in the good will and the good sense of mankind, the more shall we find this confidence justified.

God makes his will known to his children through the twofold voice of reason and conscience. Through reason we perceive the right and distinguish different degrees of worth among the possible objects of desire. Through conscience we are drawn to do the right and to choose the things of highest worth. In recognizing this voice as the true source of inspiration to all right living and sound thinking, and in preferring it to all external authority whatever, there is a deep religious significance. For in thus trusting our inborn powers we show our reverence for our Maker who has so endowed us. We trust and obey and worship him as he is revealed to us in our own natures, rather than as he is represented or misrepresented in the dogmas and creeds. The discarding of the creed is not the overthrow of faith; it strengthens and establishes faith. It transfers faith from parchment to the soul, from dead oracles to the living heart; and finds its evidence in the conduct, the character, and the lives of men and women of to-day.

So the free church symbolizes not the destruction of faith, but the freedom of faith. And in this freedom is achieved the greater faith that ap-

pears in the widening of the boundaries of thought and life, in the deepening and enriching of life's meaning, in the strengthening of all good, in the bringing to pass of all divine possibilities, and in the pursuit of all noble ideals.

To the end that it may be real and abiding, faith must be based on something more enduring than a creed. We must trust the human heart and mind, because it is in the heart and mind that God reveals himself. We must believe in each other. We must believe in the divine quality of human life. We must believe in the eternal Goodness and Power that are revealed in the lives of men. This is the true faith; it is the faith that has been of old; it is the one faith that will endure world without end.

It has been said that "Christ was the first true democrat that ever breathed." He taught and in himself he illustrated the dignity and worth of man. He set the human spirit free from the tyranny of the letter. He made men free of their natural heritage of faith. He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another."

"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Yes, behold the man! What man? Any man that is capable of laughter and tears and human speech, of memory and hope and love; any man who thinks well of those sterling virtues which from generation to generation do not change; any man in whom are the elements of sincerity and courage; any man who reverences what is highest and holiest in life. It does not matter from what obscure Nazareth, from what

lowly walk he may come. Behold him, the upward striving man. Stand with bared head in his presence. He has kinship with that other man from Nazareth. The whole meaning of Jesus' life is that any life may be glorified, that all life is divine, and that by just obeying its noblest impulses the spirit of man may reach its divine completeness. Out of every Nazareth much good may come. A man as just a man, a woman as just a woman, have in them all the glorious possibilities of that historic man from the Nazareth in Galilee.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

By Joseph H. Crooker

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A THOROUGH and painstaking research into the status of religious education in its present connection with and its proper relation to, our various institutions of learning, from the public school to the great university. The religious motive in its relation to popular education is fully examined; and the present conditions and recent changes in religious instruction and freedom of worship in denominational institutions, normal schools, agricultural colleges, and State universities, receive special treatment in chapters of much significance, where are traced the gradually growing liberal tendencies in prescribed religious requirements. One of the most valuable and instructive portions of the volume is given to an account of some interesting experiments in the way of enlarged religious freedom made in recent years by some of our largest universities, through their altered attitude toward the problem of the religious culture of their students. All of this extremely suggestive material is brought to a practical close by a clear and comprehensive array of conclusions and recommendations.

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STEPS OF BELIEF

By James Freeman Clarke

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AN able advocate's successful defence of Rational Christianity against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism In a vigorous, unprejudiced, and frank way the author emphasizes the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion while at the same time undermining the positions upon which these three opponents of Rational Christianity take their stand.

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By James Freeman Clarke

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THESE lectures are admirable presentations of the vital principles of Christian faith, containing many helpful suggestions, especially for those disturbed by the transition from the old to the new religious thought. The subjects are: I. Faith and Belief: Essential Belief concerning God. II. Christ and Christianity. III. The Bible. IV. The Church and Worship. V. Christian Experience. VI. The Future Life.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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American Unitarian Association

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[No. 267]

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE CONGREGATION

BY

REV. WILLIAM H. LYON, D.D.

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25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE CONGREGATION

Thou art a priest after the order of Melchisedec.
Hebrews 7:17.

ABRAHAM, the father of the Hebrew race, is returning from a great victory, when he is suddenly confronted by Melchisedec, the priest of the Most High God. What this title means, no one knows surely, and the priest himself never appears again. For a moment he stands before Abram, receives tithes of all he has, and vanishes forever. He is mentioned once in a psalm, and centuries later by the writer of this Epistle to the Hebrews. He had no connection whatever, so far as we can see, with the regular priesthood of the tabernacle or the temple. Apparently he had received his commission directly from above, and this may be the reason why he is called the priest of the most high God.

The writer of this interesting Epistle uses Melchisedec in a very original way. He is trying to console the Jews who have become Christians for the loss of their long line of priests, and he tells them that God has begun a new line with Jesus, who is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. He adds that Jesus differs from the priests of the old order in that, while they made sacrifice of bulls and goats, he offered himself. On this fact the writer founds one of the most beautiful lines of reasoning in the whole New Testament, but the point on which attention should be fixed is the

implication of this quaint old story of Melchisedec,—that there are priests who are not formally ordained.

While truth enters the world pure through the soul of the prophet or seer, it must have a body, an institution, an organization of followers to guard it, develop it and apply it. The great teachers,—Jesus, Buddha, Mahomet,—were followed by formally organized corps of administrators who were to carry out their message into its practical applications, organize the body of believers, and see that wise means were taken to perpetuate the truth. The Christian Church was as natural a result of the gospel as a corporation is of the discovery of a gold mine. The Church cannot exist without a message to deliver, but the message cannot be delivered generation after generation without the Church. This is only to say that, in the world in which we have been made to live, body and soul must go together. To quote a well-known epigram, "If a body without a soul is a corpse, a soul without a body is a ghost."

Now the priest has been in all ages the man who is set aside to take charge of religion. When a new faith begins, the believers in it give themselves up to promoting it. So we read that after the death of the Master his followers kept together, put their property into a common purse, and met every day to worship and to share their frugal meals till the Lord should return. But the Lord did not come, and the necessities of common life forced the disciples back into their homes and occupations. It then became neces-

sary to put religion into the hands of a special class of men, first the apostles, then a larger class of "ministers," till we find a regular priesthood come into the foreground and take charge of all the affairs of the Church, secular as well as sacred.

Every child knows the result. The power thus put into the hands of the priests was too much for human nature in the long run to bear. Where the people are ignorant and superstitious, it is well that men of a higher order of mind and character should rule over them in religion as in secular matters. But, as the general level of intelligence and self-control rises, the priest in the old sense becomes unnecessary and dangerous. The Reformation, coming when a variety of events had widened the mind and raised the character of the average man, took the power back from the appointed priests and vested it in the hands of the believers. So every man became a priest. Just as every man became a prophet in that God revealed the truth to his mind, so every man became a priest in that God placed in his care the institutions in which the truth came to be embodied. The minister was his deputy, not his substitute. So came the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood under which we live. Though it becomes necessary to form an association for the cultivation of religion, and to build houses for its public exercise in common, just as we form societies for the cultivation of the fine arts or education and build museums and colleges for their homes, and though we choose men to teach us, as in all other matters that we have to learn,

—yet the primary source of power remains in the individual. The church is the company of believers, and the minister, while he has a special and sometimes a superior education, is the servant of the people. They are the church. They are the priests after the order of Melchisedec, as the Master himself was, by no act of public consecration, by no professional education, but by the calling of God to the sense of sonship and brotherhood.

But as, in the parable, the cares of this world choke the word and it becometh unfruitful, even when it has fallen into good ground, so the variety and the heaviness of the layman's daily task are liable to throw the responsibility for the welfare of the church upon the minister, until he becomes almost a priest in his power. The high level of personal character and life among the members of the older Unitarian parishes, taken with their shyness of pious language, attitudes, and observances, seemed to show that they were followers of the prophetic teaching which made the service of God consist, not in sacrifice and ritual, but in doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. I do not mean by this that they are doing this better than other people, but that this is their ideal of how God wishes to be worshipped. And yet it would seem, on the other hand, that in their carelessness of church attendance and even in their very generosity of contributing everything but their own presence and activity, Unitarians really believed in the priestly idea in the old sense,—that, so long as the minister is in his place and is such

a man as they approve for his office, it makes little difference whether they appear before him or not. If they are sure that he will do the right thing in the right spirit, there is no need that they should be there with him. I am eager to bear witness, from the experience of nearly forty years of service as a minister, to the extraordinary kindness, patience, and appreciation of our Liberal congregations toward their pastors. We are none of us worthy of it. The minister needs more criticism than he gets. The difficulty is that he does not get what is given, since it is usually given by his parishioners to each other, where it does no good, and not to him who would be most helped by it. The misfortune of the minister is that he is apart from his fellowmen, separated, as the old phrase was, "separated to the ministry" in altogether too literal a sense.

This, however, is only a single illustration of the main point, that the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of the believer is only theoretically held by a large part of our laity. I should say that our Unitarian people, while they believe more thoroughly than many other Christians the prophetic side of their belief, in that they hold the true service of God to be the attitude of the heart and conscience rather than of the body, are too negligent of the priestly side, that worship is not to be done for the people by a body of men set apart for the purpose, but by the people themselves, who are priests in the sanctuary just as they are kings at the polls.

In fact, it might be added that our people—

the Unitarian constituency in general—are too shy of taking part in those portions of the public worship which are assigned to them. The congregational singing in most of our churches is lamentable,—not only, as Mr. Beecher said, because in order to have congregational singing it is necessary first to have a congregation, but because there seems to be either too much shyness or too little ability to sing. One often wonders whether the amount of music which we hear in these days has set so high a standard that most, even of those who can sing, are too ashamed of their voices to use them, or whether the power to sing, like the power to learn words by heart, is left behind in our childhood. In our schools every boy or girl, with rare exceptions, sings. What has become of our voices since then? Mr. Bryce in the first edition of his "American Commonwealth" told us that he was attracted to the saloon of the Fall River steamboat, as he was on his way to New York, by the sound of singing, and found that it came from a large party of Unitarians gathered about the piano. He understood that they were on their way to a convention of some kind at Saratoga. We can sing, then. Voices do not depend upon doctrine. Let us take up this priestly function and not hand it entirely over to the choir.

On the other hand, I am often impressed with the heartiness with which our people—in all our churches—enter into the responsive parts of our services. The psalms for the day are always read with a relish. I doubt if there are any kinds of Christian worshippers who appreciate

so thoroughly the beauty of the Bible and of our English translation of it. I am always struck by their keen interest in even the reading of the Scripture lesson for the day. I am convinced that there is a capacity for worship slumbering in our Liberal constituency that hungers for expression, and that when it finds means of utterance in ways that do not offend its sense of truth, it wakes and responds to the opportunity. The spread of liturgical forms of worship among our Liberal congregations has been somewhat remarkable, and I think I speak for most ministers when I say that what is called "free prayer," the prayer of the minister himself, while there are times when it has peculiar fitness and power, when, in fact, no other kind of prayer would meet the occasion, is, as a regular part of the service, somewhat embarrassing, for reasons which every thoughtful person can understand. It is difficult to pray for a congregation without praying to it, except on occasions of peculiar fitness. In spite of the danger of formality, and in spite of the danger that forms of prayer held through generations may come to imply beliefs that have been outgrown, the use of prayer in common by congregations that have agreed that such is the prayer they wish to make, will probably grow in our liberal churches. In other words, if the prophetic character of our liberal faith can find forms that can be used sincerely, it will take on its priestly function with willingness and heartiness.

Now let us come to the side of our priestly function which all Protestants, and especially

those of a liberal type, are most apt to neglect. I mean their duty toward the organized forms of faith.

First, there is the duty of every believer toward the sect or entire body of those who share his beliefs. If we arrange Christians according to what seems to us to be the proportion of error in their belief, we shall find, strangely enough, that the amount of sacrifice that they are willing to make for their faith varies almost exactly in that ratio,—that is, the more error the more willingness to support it,—the less error the less sacrifice. One of our older ministers, who had a keen but rather sad humor, used to say that it seemed to him as if people gave money to their religion in about the inverse ratio to the amount of truth in it,—from the Catholics who had not much truth to believe but gave about all they had to it, down to the Unitarians whose faith was all true but who gave almost nothing to it. Our faithful representatives in the Association Building, who have never been surpassed in the extent or the organization of our missionary work, would probably relish this comparison. Every church ought to give at least double what it gives now. It is a part of our priestly duty.

But let us come closer home. What our old friend had to say of loyalty to the denomination may be said also of loyalty to the local church. If we contrast the kitchen end of our house with the parlor end in this respect, we get a useful lesson. It would seem as if attendance at church, like contribution to its support, were inversely proportioned to the amount of truth taught by it.

Or, to put it from another side, it would seem that the less important the function of the minister is the more we leave him to do it without us. The people who believe in an exclusive and official function of the minister are more likely to be at church with him than those who believe that he has no power which is not shared by every member of the congregation. In other words, the more people believe in a sole power given to the minister, the more sure they are to be with him, while the more they hold to the priestly function of every believer, the more they leave the minister to exercise his function by himself. Or again, the less the success of the service depends upon the people the more sure they are to attend upon it, while the more the success of the service depends upon the people the less likely they are to claim their share in it. The history of Protestantism, since the belief in the priesthood of every believer gained a foothold in the modern world, has been a history—after the first enthusiasm—of declining interest in religion. The Liberal believer has won his rights only to neglect them. The Catholics surrender their rights only to exercise them. In a measure it is the same with the right of manhood suffrage. One of the most pugnacious of men, who would die to get the ballot, told me that he has never voted in his life,—and he said it with considerable scorn of the whole business. It is fair to ask all Protestants to consider whether the neglect of church attendance, which seems to be increasing in this generation, according to some law which brings it about at the be-

ginning of every century, is not a neglect of a right which they would be very sorry to lose, and whether, even here in New England, the land of the Puritan, which is rapidly falling into the hands of their ancient and eternal enemies, this neglect is not likely to have a very serious influence ultimately upon the public welfare. But, putting this extreme view aside, let us consider whether this progressive throwing of the entire responsibility for the success of churches upon their ministers is not an abdication of that priestly function and responsibility which the Christian religion has placed in the hands of the people. In plainer words, is not the man in the pew as responsible, from the Protestant point of view, yes, from the original Christian point of view, as the man in the pulpit? Or, to narrow the question down still more, has it not been the result of our liberal Christianity, with its abandonment of the old idea of a necessary personal conversion and personal union with the church, to diminish the sense of personal responsibility for the church's very existence? If so, we must accept the consequences of the truth. But we must not do it without a struggle. We must turn back upon ourselves and ask our conscience what duty remains from the unsuperstitious Christian toward the church.

There are some who take the same view of the church as of the Art Museum, that it is an influence for good upon the whole community, and therefore they become subscribing members, though they never or rarely use its privileges themselves. There are others who use the church

as many use the Art Museum,—who do not subscribe to it, but go into it when they feel like doing so. Both these classes are welcome to the church. To a degree they balance each other, but, in any case, the church should be grateful to those who help support it though they do not use it, and we ought to be glad that it seems attractive to those who, in the heavy cost of our modern life, cannot add the expense of regular attendance at church. The house of God should be open to all the children of God.

And yet, it is to be wondered whether most people realize the power they have as individuals to make a religious service successful. A number of people gathered together anywhere are like a number of electric jars. The intensity of motion and of emotion grows with numbers. It is true of all forms of feeling. There is a psychology of a mob as there is of the individual. The fright which takes place in a crowded theatre at an alarm of fire would not affect any one of the audience if he were alone, as it affects almost every one by the contagion of alarm. The interest of a lecture or a campaign speech or of a sermon grows according to the numbers who share it. Add to this the appearance of success which comes with numbers and which inspires each individual by the very thought of being where others think it worth while to be, and we find a power put into the hands of every one, however humble he may be, to contribute by his mere presence to the success of whatever may be the cause of the assembling together. People differ from each other in personal influence, but

there is a sense in which every human being is equal to every other one in that he is *one,* and adds one to the numbers which are of themselves of influence. In the suffrage of a political campaign, every man counts one and therefore is responsible as one for the success of the right. In every public meeting, political or religious, the humblest person increases the numbers which not only impress all who are there, but make feeling more intense by their mere presence. This is but to say in another form what has been put in religious language, that every member of the congregation is not merely a receiver of influence, but a giver, not merely a hearer, but a preacher, not merely a worshipper, but a priest. "Where two or three are gathered together," said Jesus, "there am I in the midst of them," that is to say, even only two or three intensify the feeling which they share. How much more is this true of the greater number? Perhaps this is the spiritual lesson of the feeding of the five thousand hungry people by only five loaves and two fishes. The scantiest measure of eloquence is intensified by passing through a multitude. It is far easier to excite a mob than a few people, and a little enthusiasm from any orator stands a better chance of being contagious in a crowded hall than in one that holds but a scattered few. What makes our Christmas and Easter services specially alive is not that the minister has a better sermon. He usually has a poorer one, because he has tried so hard to make a fine one. The interest is generated, not by his scanty loaves and fishes, but by the galvanic

touch, elbow to elbow, of a full congregation.

The danger of Protestantism lies in the success which its main principle has gained. The Catholic Church, out of which we rose, exalts the institution and belittles the individual. In communities or nations where the individual lacks initiative, it has great success, both of the evil and of the good kind. Its benefit to the world through the chaotic conditions of the Dark Ages we are not likely to estimate too highly. Whether it can serve an age and a people of strong individual development it is trying now to show. Protestantism, however, and especially the Liberal form of it, makes a specialty of the individual life, puts it as such alone before its God, and, to use a phrase familiar to our modern ears, "connects" each one with heaven. This, however, means peril to the organization, religious or political. Freed from the arbitrary power of the king, the individual is apt to rebound into political selfishness. Freed from the power of the ancient Church, he is equally liable to fly away into irresponsibility for any religious institution, and the splendid doctrine of Christianity, that every man becomes a priest of God and responsible for the church which once was responsible for him is apt to be too refined to mean much to him. We are seeing upon all sides a new sense of our personal responsibility for our political welfare springing up, and in its wake or by its side we must develop the great Christian doctrine of the priesthood of the believer, and his personal responsibility for the success of his church.

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[No. 268]

THOUGHTFUL AGNOSTICISM AND PRESENT-DAY UNITARIANISM

Their Agreements and Differences

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FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

BY

REV. GEORGE H. BADGER

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus
Salvation by Character
The Progress of Mankind
Onward and Upward Forever

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church

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Our Declaration

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THOUGHTFUL AGNOSTICISM AND PRESENT-DAY UNITARIANISM

THEIR AGREEMENTS AND DIFFERENCES

A FAR-EXTENDING country must naturally expect to find its opposite borderlands very different from one another. Our American Republic finds its neighbors of the North in Canada not much like its neighbors of the South, the Mexicans, in language, customs, political ideals or industrial habits. It is a good deal the same with our denominational realm. The Unitarian body is not a great denomination, perhaps, if numbers are to be considered the test of largeness, but it certainly has a wide range. All denominations range widely in modern times, indeed; but there is a frankness and definiteness about the Unitarian's willingness to range, an utter refusal to set up artificial bounderies, or compass unnatural compressions through dogma tests, which, while it adds to our real spirit of unity and widening sympathy of religious ideas, yet favors aggressive pioneership in our faith well out toward the borders of all other faiths that are in any sense rational.

Some time ago there appeared in the columns of *The Unitarian* an "Excursion" into the Borderlands which lay between us and the great Empire, shall I say, of established orthodoxy. Why may it not be well to make a similar excursion across the frontier at the opposite edge of our spiritual realm, into the borderlands of those who feel themselves entirely outside of Christianity, outside, perhaps, of what is specifically

deemed religion at all, the borderland of agnosticism and so-called infidelity.

There are various types of "agnosticism," of course. Some of it is pretty poor stuff. But then, for that matter, some Christianity is pretty poor stuff, too. Some agnosticism is simply a mush of sentimental soft-heartedness, distressed at everything sternly positive and established and in good order. Some agnosticism is simply swollen conceit of spirit setting itself flippantly in defiance to the thoughts and the experiences slowly worked out through the ages. Some of it is but a phase of spiritual Philistinism, if you will permit the phrase, the product of crass ignorance in the things of the spirit, the boorish incapacity of soul to discern the larger bearings of life's fundamental verities. Some agnosticism is pure mental laziness of souls not energetic enough to think their way through the outer crust of superficial negation; some agnosticism is unmitigated cowardice—the fear of the soul either to admit or to deny the validity of its own reason and intuition. Some agnosticism is vicious perfidy of the soul—the attempt to dodge the stern demand of conscience and the moral law, by assuming a lack of warrant for life's deep reality of Right and Justice.

But these are not the types of agnosticism which we have now to consider. These do not touch our borders at all; we have no honest point of contact with such. What I have in mind is rather that type of agnosticism which lies very close along our frontier edge of faith. For lack of a better phrase I would call it "thoughtful agnosticism." It is the agnosticism of men and women who have seriously thought and earnestly pondered over religious things; who have

had some conscience in the matter, and who have not blurred their soul's vision by clouds of personal immorality, selfish ideal of mean indulgence, or cynical heartlessness.

The theology of these men is not precisely the same as our own; their religious ideal is not identical with ours. We think that their position is in certain respects invalid, and their moral incentive incomplete; and yet they do stand very near our borders, and we and they have very much in common.

In the first place—we may be very frank about it—our views regarding the Hebrew Scriptures are practically the same, although we may put the emphasis of interest differently. We both regard them as the splendid literature of a people peculiarly rich in ethical ideal. We both reject all belief in supernatural agency in their production, or supernatural warrant in their dictum. We both accept to the full the results of the so-called "higher criticism," and study this literature as we would study the literature of any other people, not to find final authority in truth, or the infallible word of God, but study for its own intrinsic beauty of thought and ideal; its own deep interest of historical suggestion and moral inspiration. But beyond this, I do not suppose that the conception which Dr. Martineau, may I say, or Minot Savage, or John White Chadwick have held regarding the Bible, differs in any essential of intellect from that which Professor Huxley or Herbert Spencer have held.

Now, at first thought this may sound like a dangerous admission; it may seem as though we had given the whole of our Christianity away, and had written ourselves frankly among the virtual skeptics. And yet it is obvious to any one acquainted with recent

"liberal orthodox" utterance that though the statement of the fact may be a little more guarded on their side, the liberal orthodox position regarding Scripture practically shades off into this same view. "The Impregnable Rock of Infallible Scripture" is being abandoned by some of those very high up in established Christian churches; and the issue of just how far Biblical criticism shall be allowed to do its fair work, and just how much of peculiar inspiration can be claimed to be left when once the admission is made that verbal inspiration is out of the question, is an issue which individual consciences may decide for themselves, but is an issue the acknowledgement of which gives the case entirely to those who reject the theory of literary supernaturalism.

Again, the thoughtful agnostics have practically the same conviction regarding the historical career of Jesus, as that which we maintain. I presume they would all agree that Jesus of Nazareth undoubtedly lived in the first century; that his was a nature peculiarly lofty, pure, genuine and noble; that his gospel was built upon an ideal of ethics surpassingly exalted; that he died a hero's death in maintenance of just that principle of altruistic service of man to man which must be the dominant factor in all social progress. They agree with us that the influence of Jesus in molding the civilization of the Western world has been prodigious; and they agree with us that those dogmas which have been most narrow and formal, and in the church to-day are acting as a check to progressive Christianity, are based on a perversion and not on a fulfillment of the actual teaching of Jesus himself,—that dominant Christianity, in other words, in its dogmas, if not in its spirit, is built not upon Christ, but

upon Paul (and perversions of Paul), who, with all his lofty insights, quite misunderstood, in many ways, the secret of Jesus.

On the other hand, we agree with these thoughtful agnostics in discarding all elements of the miraculous and so-called supernatural from the career of Jesus. We do not believe that he was God; we believe that he shared with humanity all that is human; that as a man he was born and as a man he died, and as a man has helped to make the world a better world, and the way of the soul's progress easier.

Finally, the thoughtful agnostic and the Unitarian agree in their conception of the universe. We alike accept the philosophy of evolution. We believe that the universe is a cosmic Unity; not the creation of an outside Deity, but the manifestation of an immanent Mystery of energy which is behind all that we call matter, and all that we call force.

For the thoughtful agnostic is almost never a materialist, now-a-days. Spencer, Tyndall and Huxley, if not Darwin, all come back to Science's irresistible conclusion, that behind what we see and know and experience in the universe, there is the ultimate mystery of energy which we cannot comprehend, but which we are forced to acknowledge.

But it is here that our differences begin; and our differences are perhaps as vital as our agreements, and on a higher plane. We accept a large number of negations of thoughtful agnosticism, for they are the negations carefully worked out by patient and conscientious science, of things superstitious, soul-narrowing and fatal to the intellectual and spiritual progress of the race. But on the fundamental *affirmation* of thoughtful agnosticism, that the universe we

live in, both as regards space and time, is a unity of being in evolution and law, and that behind it is an ultimate mystery of energy which is One, we build the substance of a faith that is religion, for the satisfaction of the deepest needs of the soul.

For while we admit that this ultimate mystery is a mystery utterly beyond our finite comprehension in the essence of its being, we insist on believing that it is not less, in its essence, than the noblest phenomena which manifest it; and that as the whole trend of universal evolution as we know it is toward the evolution of love, righteousness, and intelligence, it is not irrational to hold that an essence of love, or something that is more than love, righteousness, or something higher than righteousness, intelligence, or something better than intelligence, inheres in that ultimate mystery of energy that we may call it God; aye, even learn the name which Jesus taught, if we will hold it always as a finite symbol of that which is infinite, and call him Father-God; for from him comes all being, we all share his energy, and his abiding order of the universe is an abiding order of sympathy, if we think it largely and to our own soul's consistency.

And so, also, we insist in finding in all the analogies of our being, in all the logic of evolution, in all the unescapable imperative of our deeper natures, a faith in essential immortality; not to be described in definite phrase, bathed ever in the modesty of present ignorance, as to modes and forms,—but yet the faith that beyond the evolution of life as we have it here, lies on time's progress-side either better life, or else better-than-life for every soul that has been caught up in a share of universal progress.

And then, if I may say it frankly, the great differ-

ence between the thoughtful agnostic and the sincere Unitarian, as it seems to me, lies in a different habit of spirit. The agnostic is he who finds it natural to dwell on the negative aspect of things. Conscientiousness with him is pre-eminently a matter of intellect; that one believe not what one has no honest right to believe. And that is certainly a great thing. Would more of us could acquire such robust conscientiousness of mind! But I do not think the agnostic is quite accustomed to give to the spiritual faculties of the soul *i. e.*, the ideal-building, the love-kindling faculties, the enthusiasms, the aspirations, the intuitions and the insights of the heart, their valid significance. I think the Unitarian, if he be a thoroughly religious man, as Channing, and Parker, and Martineau, and Chadwick, and Dr. Hale were, is willing to take his negations as he must take them, resolutely and bravely, but finds life's richest joy in building in the things of the spirit which are genuinely true and positive. He is hungering and thirsting after an interpretation of life in love and duty, and faith, and not simply in knowledge and science. He is concerned not mostly with the manifestations of cosmic energy in the universe about him, but in the *nature of the life within him;* and so he builds for religion and aspiration, while the agnostic delays in science, and builds for intellect mainly.

Now I am not going to argue about this matter. If there happens to be any thoughtful agnostic reading this article I am not going to labor to bring him to my way of thinking in these respects of theology. I gladly would do so if I had the time, and I would gladly give my time to such a friend, if ever he would ask it of me, that I may hear what he has to urge as

well as urge my own position. But I want to say just this word now which, I hope, may chance to reach some one who calls himself an agnostic, and so has held himself aloof from all church life.

The thoughtful agnostic shares with all true men a faith in the moral ideal. For all the things he thinks he cannot know about *religion,* there are some things he is certain about in actual *life.* He is sure that a good man is better than a bad man. He is sure that love is nobler than hate. He is sure that generous self-sacrifice is holier than mean selfishness. I have never known an avowed agnostic of the thoughtful type whose moral sense was not fine, whose ideal of humanity was not exalted. And whether there be a God or not, and whether there be a future life or not, such an agnostic believes in progress; believes that the world may become better, wiser and nobler in its humanity; and believes that such progress is good; and that everything that helps it on is blessing to humanity.

Now what the individual true man can do to help the world grow better and wiser is much. His personal influence; his personal contagion of noble example; his personal protest against falsity and error and superstition and injustice; his personal championship of truth and reasonableness and justice and honor are not wasted, though his place in life be obscure, his gifts of mind humble.

And yet does not he realize that *massed* effort and influence here, as elsewhere in human affairs, have peculiar value; that the forces which make for truth and right, for honest thinking and honest living, can be so organized as to push more strenuously against the powers of entrenched falsehood and error and

wrong, than any individual strength can do? Can such a man, with a conscientious sense of his duty before the problems of his own time, and the urging needs of his own time, in Truth's name, and in Right's name, fail to feel some responsibility that overleaps his personal power of influence to help somewhere in larger streams of influence, in better organized endeavors to hold the moral ideal aloft, to stimulate conscience and honor and love among men, and hurry Truth's cause on, and fight the fight of Justice, and push in the way of Progress?

In other words, does not the thoughtful agnostic feel that, *if* only (perhaps to his mind a very large *if*) the church could be stripped of that which he believes to be its superstitions, of its entrenched errors, of its narrowing ideals, of its useless ceremonials, and priestcrafts and ecclesiastical traditions, and made simply what it ought to be, the massed force of sincere and earnest men and women trying to make humanity nobler, and truth plainer to the children of men; if only the church could be made just this in the name of righteousness, does he not feel that his duty and his glad service would be to join in and help such noble work along?

Now, it is just this that we are trying to do in our liberal church. There are some things which you and we may not quite agree about, my agnostic friend. We persist in phrasing our thought of God in terms of love and intelligence as real in his being. We persist in believing that when we die we may rationally hope to live again; and these are faiths you cannot feel certain about. But, on the other hand you cannot be certain that these faiths are not true; and, even if they be untrue, yet they embody, at any rate, the

largest ideal of righteousness and justice and love that the soul of man has yet dreamed out. For our faith in God is, at any rate, involved in no scheme of salvation which can bring a blush of shame to a generous man's cheek; is involved in no conception of revelation grounding religion on gross partiality, injustice and caprice; is involved in no idea of immortality tainted with cruelty and wrong. Perhaps, as you sometimes tell us, our idea of God is simply man's noblest ideal of himself; but, at any rate, *it is that,* with no creed barriers set to keep the God-thought at a standstill while the soul's idea for itself grows on. From your point of view we are, at any rate, fighting truth's warfare, part way, against those who would cling to antiquated error. And, however that may be, and whether our ideal of God be true or not, we are trying to put the *emphasis* of religion on righteousness, on truth, on love, where you are putting it; we are trying to fight humanity's fight for progress; why cannot you come and help us, join your conscience-sense of duty with ours, and be one with us in helping to make this world better, at any rate, though you think there is no world beyond?

For think of it honestly, friends, is it not significant that our doors are frankly open to you? The entrance to our church is not through creed, is not through dogma; it is through endeavor; through sincere purpose to live truly, and help the world become an easier place to live truly in. We have no creed whatever to bind in men's faiths and aspirations; but we have one vital faith, which I think is yours and ours, together; and that faith is the ultimate basis of our church being. Our faith is that a man's own conscience and his reason are, for him, ultimate

authority in religion; and the agnostic honest in his doubt is nearer God and his kingdom than the dogmatic believer whose faith is but a timid convention and an equivocating make-shift.

Whoever wants to stand for right and honesty and progress in truth-seeking; whoever wants to stand for purity, love and generosity; whoever wants to stand for manhood made better and womanhood made nobler, has right to stand with us. Our church is his. And we have right to demand, not in our own name, in the name of Righteousness and Truth, we have a right to demand that he do stand with us, help us in making the world's thought clearer, and its life truer; we have right to make the duty-call to all who can feel at home in our broad fellowship to rally to our standard.

And may I add just this last word? I am not at all afraid of thoughtful agnosticism in the church or out of it, and it is my faith that when the thoughtful agnostic becomes familiar with our thought and breathes often the atmosphere of our religious life, he will find that we have nothing to deprive him of in his mind's bold liberty of thought, but that we have something to share with him of the spirit's wealth, which he genuinely wants. I think he will find that our spiritual enthusiasm for God, our sunny hope turned toward immortality, our rational interpretation of the ideal which Jesus stands for, are realities which he has already begun to reach out after himself (though perhaps he has sought different phrases) in his own free thought; only we may help to put the emphasis more sturdily, we may have the gift of orbing vague surmisals into clearer logic, and we, at any rate, are ready to give the aspirations and the

ideals of the deepest soul a chance to assert themselves and find their proper strength in a congenial atmosphere of frank spirituality.

I do not think the thoughtful agnostic is likely to remain long an agnostic, for his very thoughtfulness. He will always confess to the things in religion that he does not know and cannot hope to know:—and God keep him and all of us from pretense of faiths we have no right to hold—but he will grow to count more upon the reality of things he does know—of love, of righteousness, of purity, of truth; and these are the *final substance* of all true religion.

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[No. 269]

THE COMING CHURCH

ITS WORSHIP AND SERVICE

BY

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THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
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SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
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THE COMING CHURCH

ITS WORSHIP AND SERVICE

THE church of to-day, following the spirit of a common definition, is a congregation of faithful people organized for the worship of God and the service of man. We cannot think that the constitution of the coming church will be essentially different, for if it should cease to worship or to serve, or if it should exalt either worship or service to the practical exclusion of the other function we must believe it would die. The church is simply organized religion, and so long as man remains religious the church will continue; for it is scarcely possible to imagine that so powerful and controlling an influence as religion, a force so strong that from the time of its emergence from the mists and shadows of remotest antiquity it has shaped and moulded the character of men and society as has no other, will continue to exist without some adequate organized expression. Just as I believe that so long as human life persists on this planet religion will also persist, so do I believe that the church will live as the visible body of religion and will continue to exercise the two functions of worship and service.

Prophecy in the sense of prediction is always of uncertain value; that is, a considerable period must elapse before the prediction can be shown to have any value, and by that time the prophet is usually beyond the reach of either praise for his acumen or criticism for his stupidity; meanwhile one prophet is as good as

another. We may venture to suggest that one thing the church of the future will do, and a very necessary thing it is too, will be to strike a reasonable balance between these two functions of worship and service. At present we are apt to go to extremes in this matter, both in the pulpit and in the pews. Speaking broadly, the pews declare they want spiritual preaching, sermons that deal with the great fundamental spiritual realities of the universe and of life, with God and man, with the imitation of Christ, with duty, righteousness, holiness, immortality. And on the other hand, a great many ministers are declaring in effect if not in words: Yes, that is what you *want* but *this* is what you ought to have, and then they give them the ethics of the single tax, the fight against tuberculosis, wife desertion, child welfare, socialism, housing, capital and labor and so on, and rightly emphasize the obligation to work as well as pray. Then again, there is the view, expressed so often that it has become trite and commonplace, that the church is a power-house for the development of spiritual energy and that its work is done when it has connected its members with the reservoirs of enthusiasm and devotion. To this is it said by others in reply: Certainly it is the church's business to generate spiritual energy and power, to inspire its members with all possible enthusiasm for humanity and the common good, but it is also equally its business to see that the enthusiasm and energy which it has created shall be actually applied where it is needed.

And so the discussion rages up and down the land, cutting across the boundaries of every denomination and dividing men upon new and living issues. Frederic Almy tells of a church where the minister

preached against the tariff and the Standard Oil Company, and a deacon left it because, he said, he did not like a creed which included the price of oil and the eight hour day; but it is a thousand times better to divide on such a question than it is, for instance, on whether baptism shall be by sprinkling or immersion. Any live issue is better than a dead one.

Now we must sympathize with both of these opinions respecting the church's functions. We all feel the pressure of the current materialism. The struggle for a living, for wealth, for power, for social position is common to all. It is not strange that some are overwhelmed by it and lose interest in whatever lies beyond the range of physical vision. Neither is it strange, men being what they are, sons of the living God, that many who are in the thick of the conflict should have a great heart-hunger for something which this world and this life cannot give. They realize that the things which are seen must pass away, they know that by and by they too must pass, and sometimes in the rare moments when these keen and forceful men of business and the professions speak their deep feelings we learn how strong is their desire for the word of the prophet concerning the things which are not seen and which are eternal. Surely this appeal ought not to be in vain.

Furthermore, the vast majority of the thirty-four millions of church members in this country are not forgetful of the claims of service, they are not oblivious of the sufferings of humanity, nor oppressors of the poor, nor robbers of the communities in which they live. They are simply plain men and women who are trying to do their duty and who will gladly do all they can to make humanity hap-

pier and the world better. Meanwhile, like some of those whose rank in life is higher than their own, they need almost more than anything else an unbroken connection with the great sources of spiritual power that they too be not overborne by the material interests of life, that they may be hopeful in sorrow, strong under moral strain and upbuilded in character.

Of course there are some within the church, "malefactors of wealth," and malefactors of poverty who would like to climb up into the other class, who no doubt deserve castigation. It is salutary now and then to point out the ethical implications of business and social practices and abuses and on occasion to uncork the vials of wrath, but even so the right perspective in these matters should always be maintained. Mr. Frederic Almy, whose name has been mentioned before, said in a recent address: "The social gospel is being preached to-day from every sort of pulpit. It is preached from the church, from the stage, from the pages of the novel, from the magazine, and from the public press, until it is a wonder that the public will stand so much of it; but there are some signs of a reaction, and I fear for the future unless social work becomes less utilitarian. It is attacking the old enemies of mankind — ignorance, disease, and sin — with such sledge-hammer blows that they are weakening visibly; but its agencies are too material, and social work needs unspeakably the poetry, the passion, the inspiration, and the interpretation of its message which the church is able to give."

Let it not be thought, however, if the church in its public preaching shall find it wise to emphasize the note of inspiration rather than the note of criticism, that it can be content to be simply a generator of spiritual

power and to take no thought of the way in which its energy shall be used. Many good men both in the pulpit and pews defend this attitude, but it does not seem to be sound. It is not in accord with common sense or with the common practice, even in the church itself. The church, for instance, inculcates the principles of morality and right living, it carefully teaches its children to walk in the right way, it does its best to prevent its members from going wrong. But if one of them persistently sets at naught the principles for which it stands, if he flouts them openly and becomes a notorious evil liver, then if the church cannot persuade him to return to the path of rectitude it must put him out or lose its own self-respect and the respect of the community. The church cannot escape responsibility for the personal conduct of its members. Neither can it avoid responsibility for the way in which is fulfilled its function of social service. Any church having declared that it exists in part to serve man must see to it that it actually renders service,— useful, efficient, many sided; that is, it must see to it that its members render such service, for a church is made up of its members. It does not exist apart from them: when it fails it is because its members are failures, when it succeeds it is because its members have nobly done their duty; when it serves honorably it is because the men and women in it are rendering splendid service. Furthermore, the service which we, the church, are bound to render is as broad as human need and, as we shall see, will carry us far beyond the limits which we have been accustomed to regard as the bounds of church activities.

Now the coming church, the church of the future, will, we may believe, preserve the balance between

these two functions of worship and service. It will not permit either one to over-ride or crowd out the other. It will safeguard the office of worship with its insistence upon the spiritual, the ideal, the eternal. It will not suffer it to degenerate into a mush of piety and mysticism, but will make it satisfy the needs of both mind and heart, of reason and emotion. How worship is likely to be enriched and made more interesting is a subject by itself which I shall not even try to touch upon. The coming church will also develop greatly the function of service; it will extend the field of its operations and will seek to moralize business and politics and society in a way which no doubt they will bitterly resent but which is necessary if the interests of all the people are to be advanced.

As to the manner in which this is to be accomplished one must speak with diffidence. Personally I believe the Sunday morning service will be in the future very much what it has been in the past. It will remain the hour set apart for worship, for communion with God and for discourse upon the great themes of the eternal world. It is the only hour in the week devoted to this purpose and its importance cannot be minimized without grave danger. The hour in which God is remembered and our relations to Him emphasized must be preserved.

But the coming church having spent its hour with God will, I believe, with equal faithfulness meet for another hour in each week, and perhaps for a longer time, to plan how it may best serve humanity and the community in which it is established. As a necessary preliminary to efficient service it would seem that the coming church must have its social service committee, or something similar, as a part of its regular parish

organization. The minister is the moral and spiritual leader of his people, he speaks to them in the name of God, he calls them to higher levels of spiritual achievement, and it is not fair for the congregation to ask him to inspire them to service and also to direct the work which they shall do. The parish committee is responsible for the proper management of the business of the church, and if they do this faithfully and well it is perhaps enough to ask them to do. But apart from the minister and the parish committee there is in almost every Unitarian church a body of people who are active in all good works, who are broad minded and public spirited, and out of this number it should be possible to elect a committee to which shall be entrusted the work of planning and directing the service which it is the duty of the church to render. The range of service in the coming church will undoubtedly be much wider than it has been in the immediate past, for a quickened conscience is demanding that Christian principles of living be applied in all directions.

Space permits no more than an indication of what some of these are. I believe, for instance, the coming church will insist that its members apply the principles which they profess to what are known as labor questions, to measures of social reform, and to larger work for the common good. Every now and then someone comes out in a sermon or an article with the statement that the workingman is alienated from the church; but this is a mistake. However it may have been in the past, it is not true now; the workingman is not alienated from the church. Alienation implies that once he had some connection with it and loved it, and then that for some reason he took of-

fence and left it; but that is not the fact to-day. Speaking broadly, the church simply does not enter into the calculation or the mind of the workingman; he does not think anything about it unless it is forced upon him. A comparatively small number of wage earners who hold extremely radical and destructive social theories are actively hostile, but this is not true of the great majority; for most of them the church is as though it were not. And the reason for this is partly the feeling that they have not been treated fairly and justly by some of the members of the churches with whom they have come in contact in the business world, and partly because the churches have not shown themselves sympathetic towards their efforts to better themselves and to rise in the social scale.

I know perfectly well the grave charges that can be brought against organized labor, the bitter conflicts, the intimidation, the violence, the outrages, the murders of which directly or indirectly it has been guilty. But I remember, too, that we who criticize have done little to acquaint ourselves with the ideals of the labor movement; we have not so conducted ourselves as to make our counsels welcome if we had chosen to give them. If we have not won the confidence of the workers and have not suggested to them a better way, then we cannot be surprised if they have listened to dangerous agitators and enemies of the social order.

If, now, we wish to win to our churches the great body of unchurched labor it can only be by showing an interested sympathy with the purposes and aims of labor and a genuine brotherliness for laboring men. It will not be an easy matter to bring them to us,

and it will take a long while. That the minister will have his part in it goes without saying, but the larger share of the work must from the very nature of the case be done by the laymen of the churches. It involves a revolution in the theory and practice of business. Hitherto business has been business, with small regard for the human element entering into it; in the future business must become a profession, and like medicine and the ministry and teaching its aim must be the greatest service to humanity. You despise a selfish minister, you have only contempt for a physician who will not put his skill at the disposal of suffering whether it can pay or not, and the time will come, it must come, when business and commerce will be brought under the sway of the same ideals and when human interests shall become their first concern.

No one can describe fully how this transformation is to be effected, but certainly the first step is for the members of the churches to get into closer touch with workingmen and to cultivate a cordial sympathy with their hopes and ideals. Questions and problems connected with labor have been especially prominent of late, and there is no sign of their falling into the background in the immediate future. They are certainly one of the subjects upon which the coming church will have to express itself and in connection with which it will have opportunity to render some of its best and most enlightened service.

So with measures of social reform and reconstruction. No one can pretend that our present social order is what we would like to have it. Something is wrong when there is involuntary poverty in the midst of plenty, when in this great country with its vast and undeveloped resources it should be difficult for

an industrious man to find a job, when wives have to go into the factory and little boys and girls of tender years are driven to labor when they ought to be at play, when human beings are herded together like animals in miserable dwellings where there is no provision for the common decencies of life and where health and morals suffer; and yet until you have made the effort you have no conception of the difficulties which surround any attempt to secure betterment. These are examples of some of the maladjustments to which it would seem that the coming church will give its attention. It would also seem that it must take a broader view of social service than it has done in the past. Always it has given alms to the poor, cared for the sick, provided for the orphan child, and has striven to stem the tide of intemperance and lust and crime. But we are learning now that the number of unfortunates appealing for help is beyond our resources and that if we are really to reduce the volume of misery rolling through society we must get back to the causes and check the stream at its source.

These are some of the ways in which the coming church will try to fulfill its declared purpose of serving humanity. It is no more than a hint of the great variety of service to which it will be called through its different congregations to address itself, but they serve to indicate the directions in which religion will find practical expression.

The coming church, then, may be expected to preserve its present constitution and more highly to develop its functions of worship and service. It will emphasize the value and importance of worship in keeping open the line of communication with the eternal spiritual realities of the universe, the source

of moral power and of inspiration to noble and courageous living. It will equally emphasize the necessity of service to man in every direction, in the spheres of business and politics and all social relations, as the one unmistakable proof of the sincerity of religious profession and of faithfulness to the ideal of the kingdom of heaven which the Master gave his life to establish on the earth.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston.

American Unitarian Association

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[No. 270]

The HOUSEHOLD RELIGION

BY

CHARLES F. DOLE, D.D.

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THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
SALVATION BY CHARACTER
THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND
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TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

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THE HOUSEHOLD RELIGION

MUCH is said just now about the decline of interest in churches and the falling away of church attendance. The most serious problem, however, is not so much on account of the churches as it is the loss of the religion of the household. What shall we do if the homes of the people have no religion in them?

It is probable that the earliest of all religions was domestic. The father of the house was the priest of religion, before there was any priestly caste or any temple. We know that the household religion was fundamental in the early life of the three great racial stocks from which our American civilization has sprung, namely, the Hebrew, the Latin and the English Puritan roots. The best of the Hebrew religion hardly depended at all upon the magnificent ritual of the temple. It developed away from the temple, and after the temple was destroyed. The religion of the Jewish home lived on even where there was no synagogue. It survived through centuries of most cruel persecution, where outward forms of worship were scarcely permitted. The fathers and mothers taught it to the children generation after generation.

The Roman religion also seems to have been essentially domestic; it was the worship of the family Lares and Penates, a religion of the hearth. You may query how much ethical value there was in the showy public worship in the Roman temples to Jupiter or Ceres. But the household religion certainly stood for a constant upward look to powers above man, for a discipline of mutual family loyalty and

obligation, for obedience to a law of duty, for certain primitive virtues, at least within the clan. It also stood for the beginning of wider social relations, and for the promise of coming civilization, by means of its rites of hospitality, extended even to the meanest of suppliant strangers. Where the religion of the fireside was, even an enemy might find shelter, food and protection. It looks as if humanity and the domestic religion grew together among all the peoples who had the least enlightenment. We know that Rome became strong as long as the religion of the home held its ground. When later the ties and bonds and oaths and ritual of the religion of the household either fell into neglect, or lost their meaning, the empire was well on its way to destruction.

We are all directly indebted more than we know to the family religion of old New England, which was indeed the religion of the most virile emigrant stock of the other colonies. Everyone agrees that it has had more than anything else to do with the establishment of our institutions. The best of the traditions of Christianity doubtless ran for hundreds of years, in spite of much bad ecclesiasticism, in the channel of devout homes. The beginning of the home consisted in the setting up of what our fathers reverently called "the family altar." Every day began with words of uplift and the thought of God. The common meeting at the table was an act of religion and thanksgiving. "The keeping of the Sabbath" did not begin at the meeting-house; it began in the home. Robert Burns gives us the perfect picture of it in "The Cotter's Saturday Night." The child of such a home breathed in an atmosphere of reverence, trust, idealism and loyalty. He knew that there were duties

to which he owed his life; he felt the bonds of immeasurable responsibilities, to the older people, to the other children, to the state; he was made aware early that if ever he stooped to mean or shameful things, he had thereby broken faith with the love of his home. He was made to associate all reality and the beauty of goodness with the love of his mother and with innumerable holy teachings by her side. Can you find in the history of the world any more precious teaching in religion, or indeed more solid foundation anywhere for complete education, than boys and girls had in the household religion of the most characteristic homes of early New England? Such homes created the churches far more than the churches created them. Such homes continually reproduced themselves, as if following a common type.

Now, the most startling thing to-day in American life (and it seems also to be a world condition), is the decadence of household religion. If the decline is not absolute, it seems certainly to be a real decline, at least in proportion to the vast increase in the population, and to the magnitude of our modern needs for a veritable religion.

Consider, in the first place, the multitude of people who, to all appearance, have no religion. The old religion of fear or superstition has vanished, and nothing has yet taken its place. I do not mean merely that millions of people have no church home; I mean a far more important fact, that they have the least possible of religion in their homes. There is no upward look and no spiritual uplift. Except when death comes, there are no services, or solemn moments, to remind the inmates of the house of the mighty issues and mysteries of life. There is plenty of in-

dividual desire and liberty, but little mutuality or loyalty, or sense of obligation, or strong character. Genuine individualism does not flourish in an atmosphere where there is so little earnest thought. No one in these homes has ever taught the children what they are here in this world for. Much is said of the growing mischief of divorce. But the prevalence of divorce is only a symptom. It comes where no real marriage is, no sight of family duty, in short, no household religion. When extra strain falls, there is no binding force strong enough to hold the home together.

This is not to deny that there is excellent human material among the millions of irreligious people. There is always a basis of natural religion, an instinct upward, at least an element of common humanity and kindliness. People are naturally religious, as they are naturally musical or artistic. But the artistic or musical nature does not of itself make singers or artists without any training or cultivation or encouragement. The world is full of people who are not aware that they have any art or music in them, and who live and die without any expression of the esthetic part of them. It is just so with religion. Do you think it thrives without any cult or discipline? Please observe, moreover, that we are using the word religion in that large sense in which it is identical with the noblest reaches of man's spirit. It becomes then nothing less than a public, as well as a private, calamity when the religious life of a people has no cultivation or expression.

We may perhaps easily account for the decline of the domestic religion on the part of a large proportion of a modern population. They have been re-

moved from their old moorings and transferred to novel and often unwholesome conditions. They find themselves in a new world, jostling against strangers in the streets of great, overcrowded towns, with everything to learn in the terms of a new language. How can they help forgetting "the gods of their fathers?" Worse yet, how can there be genuine household religion without due privacy, with no time for quiet thought, without a garden or a tree, in the squalid rooms of tenement-houses, with the husband and father perhaps toiling 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days in a week, in a steel mill? Let us not boast of our modern industrial methods. They have almost destroyed the possibilities of domestic religion for a vast number of families in America.

But what shall we say of the more privileged class, with money and fine houses and education, many of them, indeed, the children of the old Puritan stock? Is it the skepticism of the age, is it the inevitable disintegration of old creeds, or is it the prevalent fashion of luxury and self-indulgence, that makes possible the saying of an observing visitor from India, that here is "a nation without any religion?" How many of the well-to-do people show any sign that a stranger would recognize that they possess a household religion? Even when they go to church on pleasant Sundays, what has become of the old custom of family prayer, of the weekly or daily Bible reading, of the teaching of great sacred verses to the children, of the singing of hymns together in the quiet of Sunday evenings? The father goes to his club; the mother frequents whist parties; the children are turned over to such care as they may get for an hour a week at Sunday-school; or perhaps they are not sent to Sunday-

school at all. How many parents take the Sunday-school seriously, and reinforce its efforts, or even expect of the children respectful promptness and regularity in their attendance? Where, indeed, are teachers to come from, capable of giving efficient moral and religious training in schools, upon which, in the decadence of household religion, a strain is now put which the schools were never intended to bear?

It is evident everywhere that in an age which has a pretty good degree of enlightenment there is a fatal lack of efficient moral will,—will to do right, will to speak the truth, will to stand alone, will to serve the public good, will to reform economic and political abuses, will to do the colossal and appealing work of humanity. But at a time when we most need this vigorous will, we find its perennial source in earnest, reverent, stalwart household religion running low. Is not this true?

Let us now grant that we may not again restore the precise methods and habits and forms of discipline which played so immense a part in establishing the life of our nation. Let us grant that a strange secular change is coming over the ancient creeds of Christendom, while a wonderful challenge is laid upon the intelligence of the world to make the words of its religion ring true to the contents of its present thought. Superstition and the religions of fear must give way before the religion of good will. I heartily believe that the time has come to discover a wide and deep common basis upon which right-thinking and true-hearted men and women may agree, and found more solidly than ever the essential and universal religion which the households of all the people must first have, before we can enjoy our superb material

gifts, or, much less, a satisfying and just national life. I see nothing that can take the place of a substantial and genuine household religion. If there is no religion at home, there will not long be religion in churches. Indeed, we want, in the best sense of the word, a revival of religion in both homes and churches.

The fact is, as I have implied throughout, that man is made to be religious. Let us express this fact in the plainest terms. Whereas we all begin and grow from the ground upward, and are animals first before we are men, and are selfish by nature before we know what love is; yet we all have it in us to become men, with the thoughts, aspirations, truth, loyalty, friendship, reverence and love characteristic of men. If selfishness is natural, manly goodness and friendliness are much more highly natural and necessary. We all know, the children know, what it is to be "at our best." The mythical "superman" is not better than common men are at their best, that is, when they let themselves go with their heart in the way that some mysterious inner power in life,—call it conscience, or duty, or love, or good will,—bids them go. We all know what it is, and how great and satisfying it is, at least on occasion, to go with this wonderful force. In other words, there is a realm of life in which a man's essential nature blossoms and bears fruit. It is the region of his ideals and affections; it is the region of his friendship and loyalty; it is the region where his patriotism and his humanity are; it is a region of infinite or immeasurable faiths and hopes. When a man enters this region for an hour he knows that he is alive and well, and fear vanishes. Here a man is unpurchasable and beyond

mean temptation. Did not common men and women enter that region on the decks of the sinking *Titanic,* and die like the sons of God?

Now, when we say that we believe in religion, we mean that we believe in this kind of facts, which proclaim man as man and not earth or animal. Whenever one really believes in these facts, whether he says the word religion or not, he believes in the essence of religion. He may have grown very shy of old words and may not care to use the word God, but he doubtless believes in that reality, behind man and grander than man, the creative life of man, which others call God, or the All-Father. The fundamental and practical question is: Do you believe in man, at his best? Do you intend to live the life of man, at his best? For this is what all the old creeds meant by the life of "a child of God," or the "Christ-life."

The household religion for the future, as in the past, has its perennial roots in this kind of faith, or better, in these facts. Its beginning is in the idea of mutuality, duty, fidelity, the love that gives itself and seeks "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Does not the world move by this kind of love? I am always impressed anew with the marvelous idealism of the marriage service. There is nothing more religious than this service, as often as the two lovers say it in earnest. Except in a world where love is at the heart of it, you cannot conceive that the idea and the reality of such a service could arise out of the otherwise merely sensual relation of the mating impulse. But the mutuality, the devotion, the religion of the new relation lifts it into that spiritual realm where not only God is, but where man and woman are at their best, and therefore with God. In

other words, "where love is there God is." It is hard to see how people who have begun their married life with this infinite uplift of religion, can drop away from their standard, and conduct the home life without any further recognition of religion. See what they have practically bound themselves to. In the first place they are committed to a great purpose. To what have they dedicated the new home? Not to the getting of wealth, or to their own ease or pleasure, but to the service of such a love as shall forever grow richer and more efficient.

I suppose this was exactly what Jesus meant when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and went on to explain that everything else is incidental to this. The test of this purpose comes presently, when one has to ask, What do we most want for the children? In the religious home there is just one chief thing that the father and mother desire for the children. It is that they, too, may have religion, that is, truth, faith, devotion, friendly hearts, the prize of love, integrity and usefulness. Anything otherwise or less is failure, but here is the kernel of life. To have religion in the home in these modern times, as really as ever in Puritan days, is to keep this master purpose foremost. It is like a constant prayer. Can it be truly present, and never be expressed?

There is a characteristic spirit, or temper, which belongs to the religion of the home. It is immensely needed everywhere in American life, in business, in industry and in politics, but it cannot be anywhere unless it comes first in the homes of the people; and the home cannot flourish without it. It is the spirit of habitual and kindly good will toward everyone,

banishing all mean jealousies, envy, and enmity. God save the children who do not have this atmosphere to breathe in! But it is as normal and possible to command this atmosphere here in this world as it ever was supposed to be in heaven. What else do people pray for, when they say, "Thy kingdom come," but this spirit? It is as if every home was destined to be a mansion of the heavenly kingdom. The guests must feel it and answer to it; the domestic helpers must reflect it and contribute their share of it. A messenger, or a tramp coming to the door, would catch the sense of it. Who does not believe in the necessity of this household religion? Who would not desire it? Every house ought to have it; but you cannot have it without purpose, determination and will.

It follows that, as in the old time, so to the end of time, the genuine household religion involves the practice of discipline and obedience, in other words, the training of the will. A host of well-meaning people are almost leaving this out at present. They are not so foolish as to think roses will thrive without care or pruning. But they seem to think that their children will grow up to be honest, truthful, pure-minded and useful without cost or trouble. This is another symptom of the prevalent lack of religion in the home. The fact is that many parents do not think much or care much about the highest of all values, that is, what constitutes life.

We are indeed asking more for the new discipline than men ever asked. The course of evolution for mankind would cease if we could afford to ask less. We aim to combine prompt, thorough and effective obedience with easy and genial comradeship. As soon as the child begins to ask questions and to reason, we

propose to take him more and more intimately into our confidence, and to initiate him into the wonderful, beautiful order of intelligent obedience, of manly freedom, of cheerful good will. As we do right because we love the right, as we speak the truth because we cannot abide falsehood, as we seek to treat men by the golden rule because this is the social law of the universe, so we propose that our children and all the people beneath our roof shall live the obedient life becoming to the citizens of a rational, beneficent, orderly and divine world.

But this kind of religion is not an idle faith, or pretty piece of idealism, to be looked at like a picture. It will not work without worthy effort and expense. It costs more to produce good and free citizens than to buy slaves or hire mercenaries. Our religion enjoins and enforces a whole series of noble and athletic habits on the part of young and old alike, especially habits of will power,—the will to say No again and again to foolish, thoughtless, inconsiderate, self-indulgent things, the will to do with soldierly promptness what we may not at first be pleased to do, provided the social good bids us. This means a resolute habit of respect to the presence of humanity everywhere, in the children, in the workmen or employes, even in the unthankful and unlovely. It means the definite putting away of prejudice and partisanship; it means the refusal of special privilege, and a generous desire to "make good," and to do one's full part in return for all that any one of us draws out of the common wealth of mankind.

The religion of the home is the root of all integrity. It is founded in devotion of the common good. It seeks cheerfully to give more than one ever gets back,

of effort, skill, respect, and love. You cannot have integrity without this kind of will. You do not learn it at the bargain counter. Does anyone imagine that the teaching of this innermost lesson of life can be put off upon strangers or school teachers; that it does not require the most ingenious, intimate and painstaking care from the father and mother, co-operating together to bring the reason and the sympathy and the chivalry of each child to bear for the establishment of character? Do you propose anything so foolish as to use better planning and quicker intelligence and better manners and more patience, outside the house, in the conduct of business, in the treatment of strangers, in social functions, than you are willing to give to the most sacred of all responsibilities—the conduct of the family? Many people are trying this reckless experiment. How many American women there are who study games and the running of automobiles harder than they ever study how to understand their own children, or how to live on noble terms with their own households! Here is another sign of the lack of domestic religion.

There is a deep law of expression which underlies life. What is thought or felt or willed demands to be uttered or acted out. The ritual of religion falls under this law. There is a reasonable ritual of the household religion. It consists in the morning greetings at the breakfast table, in the precious evening confidences between mother and child, in the keeping of birthdays and holidays; it used to be observed in the regular family prayers. Let no one ever despise these time-honored and simple formalities. Let us rather be scared if they have anywhere ceased to be, without anything better to take their place. Let

us modern people do better, if we can. Let us not be content to do worse or less.

Does any thoughtful person seriously propose never to make any recognition of the great spiritual realities and faiths and hopes which are wrapped up with the very existence of our civilization? Have you entered into the profound obligations of marriage without any faith in that most human and spiritual realm, below the level of which men merely range like so many animals? Do husband and wife not even know where to turn for the perennial words of consolation and hope in the hours of inevitable disappointment or sorrow; or where to find expression for the great joys that ever and anon come into the married life? Have they no established and regular means of setting before their own minds and before the minds of the children, the grand ends and aims which bind human life with sacred cords and make it worth while? No wonder that we often have to look on households in trouble or discord or pain, with one deep and hopeless comment of pity and commiseration: "These neighbors of ours have no religion." Perhaps they professed a religion in church, but they never had practiced the household religion.

I protest that the modern world is not poorer in the means of an honest domestic ritual than the world of our fathers. Its Bible is larger and more varied than the limits of the Old and New Testaments. Innumerable hymns and noble words of the prophets of all ages and nations are to be had, if desired, for the use of the humblest household. They serve to teach us new respect for all races of men. Do you suppose the busiest people could not afford the time, perhaps at the breakfast table or at nightfall, to turn

their thoughts for a moment to some great verse of inspiration, and so get the tune and rhythm of the work of the day, or the respite of an emancipating trust in "the Eternal Goodness?" The fact is, everyone desperately needs this kind of uplift, with all that family prayer ever meant, to the end that we may keep the social family temper, and face life like men.

Sunday surely gives an opening for the household religion to grow. Any household, by taking a half-hour every Sunday could easily within a single year read aloud together all the best parts of the old Bible, and learn a dozen of the grandest Psalms, and talk a little with the children about what these things mean. Is it possible that anything else,—sleeping, or strolling, or automobiling,—is so important as this? Please understand that this is not merely for the sake of reading the Bible, or whatever other Golden Book you might take in its place. It is rather that, at least once in the week, the whole household should rise to the heights of their lives, and have real "conversation" together (too often now lacking), with heart and mind and will working in unison. Indeed, it was this fact of the whole household, dressed at their best, and at their best in mutual temper and spirit, that made the old-fashioned family church-going so precious a factor in the Puritan history. What would become of a family whose members, though living under one roof, never met together "at their best?" Can you forecast the civilization of any people where this should become the typical family?

I can merely suggest here the bearing of all this upon certain important aspects of the community life, upon the neighborly relations, for example, toward

our new immigrants; upon the relations of business and of employment, in view of the impending changes toward a more democratic organization of industry; upon the working out of our best schemes of popular government, the mere beginnings of which have as yet been established; upon certain incoming means of international order and peace. The moral fiber necessary for the work of civilization is developed primarily in homes, and only in schools and industry and society afterward. The roots of the coming civilization go down deep to their sources in the household religion. The national life will be made strong only by the strength of the great Puritan virtues, —truthfulness, conscientiousness, loyalty, kindliness, the will to serve and be useful, moral courage, taught by scrupulous and public-spirited fathers and at the knees of noble women, taught by the continual example of fair and generous dealing, taught under the sanction of faith in the eternal reality of the good life.

I wish, finally, to say a few words of the bearing of the household religion upon the very serious problem of the modern church. The trouble with the churches to-day doubtless is in the comparative enfeeblement of the ties of the household religion. The spiritual welfare of the people is suffering from industrial conditions which make true family life almost impossible. The church was created not by individuals, but by families, and for the sake of groups of families.

The test of the church, and the test of the Sunday-school likewise, is in the force and quality of the reaction of the public worship and ritual and teaching upon the homes from which the people come. The church just now is not bearing this test satisfactorily.

Its ministers have too far forgotten what they are working for. The Sunday-school must never be made a substitute for the teaching of the religious home. The Sunday-school, indeed, never ought to undertake to bear the responsibility, inseparable from parenthood, for giving the children moral and religious instruction. The Sunday-school was, in fact, begun as a makeshift to help children who had no good homes of their own. It is almost wicked for parents, who send children to Sunday-school from good homes, not to take the work of the school seriously, or to cooperate with it, or to care whether their children learn its lessons or not.

On the other hand, the good home needs the good church. There is action and reaction between them, needful for both. The social religion is necessary to supplement the narrower family religion. We who are parents constantly need uplift, inspiration, encouragement, the interpretation of the mysteries of life into faith and brotherhood, the sense of a common purpose and a great cause, the enthusiasm that comes by joining hands and hearts with a multitude of others of kindred spirit. The young children in the old days surely got something by being taken with their parents to the same service with all the other friendly households of the town, by the dim but real consciousness of a holy presence, a common purpose, and the infinite meaning of life. I believe that young and old are always better for the touch of the larger humanity that underlies a genuine church service. It is good for all the people of the hundreds of families to rise to their highest as men, and to be "at their best" with a common good will. It is good if it were only for an hour, but it is not for an hour;

it is with a new intent to live the good life continually. Thus the church supplements the home, and ought to do this vastly better, as the united households ought to help and require it to do.

Moreover, there are a great many unfortunate parents who do not know how to teach their children, or how to lead their households in the processes of the higher thoughts. The church, and the Sunday-school, too, have here their proper function. No one should ever take away from the parent the sublime privilege of communicating to the children the highest things that we know. But the church and its classes and its Bible school may well help the parents, and indeed must learn to help and teach them, if the church itself is to continue. It is idle to complain that this is not yet done to-day; it must be done, and done effectually. The church is not fit to live which does not find out how to revive and develop the interest, the loyalty and the enthusiasm of all the heads of its homes in the fundamental household religion. It is toward this absolutely necessary end that we ask the consideration of all who love children, who have the care of households, who cherish worthy hopes for the renewed life of the nation, and for a happier civilization for the families of mankind.

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO "DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

For the maintenance of these endeavors the Association depends upon the annual contributions of the churches and the friends of the cause. Contributions should be sent to the Treasurer of the Association at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 271]

CHRISTIAN UNITY

[*THE NAME and THE REALITY*]

BY

REV. WILLIAM SAFFORD JONES

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars, the principal to be securely invested and the income to be used to promote the work of the Association.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

THE NAME AND THE REALITY

JOHN 12:32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

PEOPLE understand the significance of pictures when they fail to grasp the meaning of the words which describe them. Hence one might see in the Art Building at the World's Fair in 1893 numberless groups, made up of individuals representing nations as far apart geographically, intellectually, and spiritually, as Canada and Japan and India and Germany, standing with rapt gaze before paintings of English cottages and hedges, Dutch kitchen tiles, Western prairies, and New England pastures. Why? Because these pictures appealed to the native instincts of love of home and of nature. Life spoke to life. Inability to read the name printed on the card below the picture did not stand in the way of its sentiment or idea appealing directly to men's hearts. Humanity always responds to humanity, and overleaps the barriers of racial antagonism and prejudice. As in the World's Parliament of Religions the unity of the Spirit was manifested in the midst of diversity of creeds, rituals, and customs; so in these vast surging throngs looking upon art which might be termed cosmopolitan you could but feel the pulsations of one mighty heart, the heart of humanity.

But I noticed that the greatest crowds were to be found in the room which was given up to paintings of the life of Jesus. Here were German paint-

ings, by von Uehde and others, representing the Master in a workman's blouse, breaking bread with peasants, or coming in to sup with them and receiving their simple, "Come, Lord Jesus, and sup with us." There were French pictures, in which Jesus was painted as a French laborer. In Jean Béraud's striking picture of the Crucifixion, the scene is laid on a hill just outside Paris. Christ's body is being taken down from the Cross by French artisans, in the presence of weeping Frenchwomen. In the background are the factories of a great city. In the foreground stands a workman, shaking his fist at the distant city. This picture evidently typified the Crucifixion of Labor by Capital.

Then there were pictures of Christ going up to Jerusalem, in Gethsemane, before Pilate,—paintings familiar to all. Now why did these great pictures draw the attention of Jews, Buddhists, and Mohammedans as well as Christians? Because the life of Jesus in its height and depth and breadth is so absolutely human that its experiences go straight home to the life of every man. The German artist might paint Jesus as a German peasant, the French artist might picture him as a French workman, the Hungarian might depict his life with an Hungarian background; but his life as it was thrown upon the canvas appealed to the crowd as the life, not of a Jew, or a German, or a Frenchman, but of a man who belongs to all time. His spirit of love and self-sacrifice makes him the ideal of humanity.

This is a striking illustration of the drawing power of the human Christ. Men who would put different inscriptions under the same picture, because they write and speak different languages, are drawn

together by what the picture represents. It is not the label which draws them together, it is the fact.

And if different nations come nearer together as they approach the pictures of the human Jesus, should not the different sections of the Christian Church draw nearer each other as they look at the facts of Jesus' life? Why is it, you ask, that men and women who call themselves by the same name, Christians, refuse to unite with each other in worshipping the same Father and following the same Master? They read the same wonderful parables in the same New Testament. They have constantly before them the same sublime figure. Why is there such a lack of sympathy between them? Why are manifestations of religious fellowship between sect and sect so rare? What keeps so many good true men out of the Christian Church? Numberless reasons, no doubt; but chief among them these. A great many sincere and zealous souls are not content to have you simply accept the facts of Christ's life and try to live in his spirit. In order to be recognized by them as fellow-Christians you must be able to read and understand the theological inscriptions which they have written underneath these facts, these New Testament pictures. Or you must interpret these facts in language which is a puzzle to you. Well-meaning persons often forget that they are Christians first, and afterwards Baptists or Congregationalists or Catholics or Unitarians. And so they decline to have anything to do with other bodies of Christians. Their sect is of more importance to them than the Church of God, the Universal Church. Hence Christendom is turned into hostile camps of

sectaries, suspicious and jealous of each other's movements.

On the other hand, denominations are valuable and useful, but they must be regarded simply as denominations. They are divisions of one great army. When the Roman Catholic Church arrogantly claims to be the only true Church it is showing the sectarian and not the Christian spirit. When the High Church wing of the Episcopal Church calls itself the American Church it shows how un-American it is. When the Presbyterian Church clings to the Westminster Confession as if it were infallible Christian doctrine it looks as if it thought more of the legal ideas of Calvin than of the religion of Jesus. But ardent denominationalism when united with breadth and tolerance is not the manifestation of an un-Christian spirit. On the contrary, some who are most uncompromising in their theological convictions and denominational affiliations are foremost in the ranks of those who are striving for Christian unity. Phillips Brooks, for example, was warmly attached to the Episcopal Church and loved the Prayer Book; but who did more to bring the different denominations in Massachusetts together? Lyman Abbott, although far removed from what is called Orthodoxy, is still a prominent figure in the Orthodox Congregational body; but he preaches just as readily—perhaps more readily—in a Unitarian Church as in a Presbyterian. Edward Everett Hale was a strong Unitarian; but his was a universal message, and more than one denomination would have been glad to receive him into its fellowship on account of his Christian spirit. Everyone ought to be loyal to his own religious body, but everyone ought to be ready at any time to unite with those

of another body either in common worship or in common work. Refusal to do this on the part of anyone shows a fatal lack of the Christian spirit.

It is the labels which we put underneath the facts of the life of Jesus that keep men of different bodies apart. They cannot all look at these facts from the same point of view. They have received varying forms of religious education. They have been trained to worship in widely differing ways. Their interpretations of the same truths will necessarily differ. What folly, then, to insist that our fellow-religionists must accept our ideas and use our phrases!

I stand, for example, before the fact of the birth of Jesus. I rejoice that the entrance of this life into the world has transformed it. I recognize the fact that the coming of Christ meant the influx into humanity of a diviner kind of life. I thank God for His gift to the world of such a life as that of our Master. But someone says to me: "I will not acknowledge you as a fellow-Christian unless you believe in the phrase I have written under this fact. You must say, 'I believe in the Virgin Birth,' that is, you must believe that the Incarnation of God in Christ is a physiological miracle. Otherwise I cannot give you the right hand of Christian fellowship, and you will therefore be cut off from the body of Christ."

Or I stand before the fact of the death of Jesus. I am filled with reverence and awe as I think of the chief of martyr-souls dying on a cross. I cry: "How many like him have gone up to the crucifixion of their dearest hopes!"

"Not in vain for us uplifted,
Man of Sorrows, wonder-gifted!
May that sacred emblem be;

Lifted high amid the ages,
Guide of heroes, saints, and sages,
May it guide us still to thee!"

But again someone comes to me and declares: "You are no Christian because you will not read and assent to the inscription which I have put beneath this picture, 'This is the blood which atones for the sins of a lost world and satisfies the Divine Vengeance.' If you cannot believe this, Christ's death will have no spiritual meaning for you."

Now in both these cases it is not the facts of the life of Jesus that separate you from your fellow-Christians; it is the labels which they attach to the facts or the inferences which they draw from the facts. These act as a barrier between you, for you are not willing to stifle your own convictions or to learn your friend's theological language. You stand before the same pictures, revering the same life, but sadly apart from each other, because he believes that you must pin your faith to his label in order to be one with him.

What, then, will bring you together? The giving up of the idea that uniformity of opinion or ritual means Christian unity and the frank recognition that Nature's unity is the only kind of unity that can be hoped for in religion, unity in diversity. It is likely that there will always be various denominations in the Christian Church because people have different tastes and needs, and no one body can meet the wants of all. The services which help the Sacramentarian are repellent to the Evangelical. The form of worship which suits the Evangelical does not satisfy the Liberal. The sermons in the Liberal churches are not acceptable to high Sacramentarians and devout

Evangelicals. These are three distinctive types of Christian thought and feeling and life. You find them in every century of the Church's history, and they are not likely to be merged in a common type, which preserves the characteristics of each. We cannot imagine what kind of a composite Christian a Catholic, a Methodist, and a Unitarian fused into one would make! No, it is far better for each body of Christians to preserve its own individuality, and to work along its own lines for moral health and religious progress.

But each body should strive for the unity of spirit and purpose with other bodies which is the highest form of Christian unity, more to be desired than any mechanical uniformity of creed or rites. And this is to be brought about, not by wholly abandoning creeds and rites, but by subordinating them to the Christian life.

When men's eyes are fixed upon the great facts of the life of Jesus which appeal to universal human experience, hung high before the eyes of all like pictures, they do not think less of their denominational affiliations, but they think more of their membership in the Church Universal. Each sect has, of course, its peculiar interpretations of these facts, which it inscribes beneath these pictures, so to speak, for the guidance of its members. But, in order to be worthy of the name Christian, each sect must refuse to make these interpretations into tests of Christian fellowship.

Let me call attention to one of the signs of the times which ought to encourage all who are working to build up a broad and tolerant Christian Church. The growing observance among all denominations of

the great days of the Christian Year, which symbolize facts in all human experience as well as the facts of Jesus' life, is an indication of a real movement toward Christian unity. Many short-sighted persons are alarmed, for example, when they behold Unitarian churches observing Good Friday or holding special services during Holy Week. They fancy that it means a return to mediæval theology, because until recently the Roman and Episcopal churches have had a monopoly in the observance of these days. They are afraid of aping others. But they fail to see the deep spiritual significance of this movement among the Liberal churches. It means the strengthening of the historic sense. It is the result of the consciousness that the roots of our spiritual life are in the past. It is bringing our branch of the Christian Church nearer the other branches, not in an outgrown theology, but in the spirit of Christian unity. And on the other hand in many other Christian bodies there is less and less emphasis upon dogmatic statements of the way in which Jesus was born and of the effect of his death upon the Divine Mind. More and more the gaze of men is being concentrated upon the great experiences of this human life, experiences which bring him very close to your life and to mine. The human Christ is being lifted up and is drawing all men, orthodox or heterodox, unto him. Christian unity is coming through the drawing power of the facts of Jesus' life. When men turn away from the creeds which try to explain and describe the person and nature of Christ, and draw near the Master himself as his life is pictured in the New Testament, they find themselves standing side by side and shoulder to shoulder.

Drawn to a common centre, unconsciously they are becoming one.

Is not this spirit of Christian unity sorely needed in the churches of many a community? Is not the spirit of narrow sectarianism too often keeping them apart? "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit of God saith unto these churches." He comes to the members of the churches who are making dogmatic tests of fellowship such as Jesus Christ never would have made, for he judged men by their deeds, not by their professions, and bids them remember that they are Christians before they are Episcopalians or Presbyterians or Methodists or Baptists or Congregationalists. He comes to the ministers of these churches and charges them to remember that they stand before the community, first of all as prophets of God, as ministers of Christ, as servants of humanity. And shall we grieve God's Spirit by refusing to listen to His pleading voice?

And yet, strong as the sectarian spirit is, it must eventually weaken and pass away. The Time Spirit will co-operate with the Spirit of Truth in destroying it. The coming generation will not have much interest in the preservation of theological animosities. It will be more interested in practical Christian work, in those things which draw men and women of all shades of belief away from selfish ease to unselfish service of the weak, the despondent, the helpless, the fallen. As the Christian world turns away from the creeds which divide men by their dogmatic assertions and is drawn to the Christ who went about serving others and who died true to his ideal of a kingdom of love and self-sacrifice, the centre of the Christian faith will be-

come, not belief in the Trinity or in the Atonement, but the fact that in the human Jesus, under the limitations which he had as a child of his age, we have the clearest revelation in history of the redemptive love of God.

Hence, it is only a question of time when in every community the churches will draw nearer and nearer to each other in sympathy and fellowship. We shall not cease to be loyal to our separate churches and our individual convictions, but the spirit of Christian unity will make us one in purpose. It may not come in your day or in mine, but it will come. The tides of God are as resistless as the tides of the ocean, which heeded not King Cnut's order to recede. Let us put ourselves in line with the Divine Purpose. May God hasten the day when "we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ".

"Lead on, O cross of martyr-faith, with thee is victory!
Shine forth, O stars and reddening dawn, the full day yet shall be!
On earth his kingdom cometh, and with joy our eyes shall see:
Our God is marching on!"

[No. 272]

From Orthodoxy to Freedom

A Chapter of Personal Experience

BY

REV. FRANK ABRAM POWELL

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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FROM ORTHODOXY TO FREEDOM

Text: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers."—Acts 24:14.

"Yea, if thou cry after discernment,
And lift up thy voice for understanding;
If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures:
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God."—Prov. 2:3-5.

FROM ORTHODOXY TO FREEDOM

When I was a boy, about fifteen years of age, I united with an orthodox church. I made what was called "The Good Confession;" and was baptized in the old-fashioned way, by immersion. It was in the month of March and the water was not very warm. But the preacher told us that if we waited for warm weather we might be surprised, and find ourselves in the next world warmer than we wished to be, and without waiting for summer. Well, we decided to cut the ice.

Our church relations in childhood and early youth are usually determined for us by environment; it is simply a matter of association. If I had been reared in a Unitarian community, I might have been Unitarian from the beginning, as many of you have been. But, since my lot had fallen unto me in the pleasant

places of the West, I found myself in early youth a member of an orthodox church.

From the beginning I took an active part in the life of the church. I taught a class in the Sunday School and spoke in what was called our "Social Meetings," devotional or testimony meetings of the congregation. Very soon I was being urged by the leaders of the local church to prepare for the ministry. I was easily persuaded because I had strong natural inclinations in that direction. So it came to pass that I preached my trial sermon on a certain Saturday night in October about five months before I was seventeen years old. After twenty-five years of severe discipline in public speaking I would probably at this time scarcely consider that first effort a "sermon," if I could recall what I said. Nevertheless I am glad that I began when I did and as I did, because I can look back over an experience which is longer and more varied than most men of my age have enjoyed, or suffered.

I entered college and pursued the regular course of preparation for the ministry. I preached every Sunday, however, and as a side issue I schooled myself in the debates and theological controversies of Alexander Campbell, who was regarded by his followers as the greatest polemic of his time, and who may very justly be regarded by all classes as one of the greatest theological controversialists of all time.

I studied doctrinal questions very thoroughly, because I was preparing myself to be a "defender of the faith." The "Disciples of Christ" or "Chris-

tians," as they are pleased to call themselves, were never afraid of battle. Following the precedent established by their founder and leader, they rather sought than avoided controversy. At least it was so in my time; I trust they are improving.

I was engaged at one time in a revival meeting. I was then about twenty-four; and I received a challenge from the Methodist minister of the town to debate the differences between the two churches. The arrangements for the discussion were made, and he sent away and got a man who was appointed to represent the conference in such discussions, a veteran in the field, who had held a number of debates in the vicinity. We debated five nights, and each session of the debate lasted two hours and a half.

In that discussion I proved to the full and entire satisfaction of my people, and the consternation of some others, that we were the true followers of Jesus, and that ours was the only true and apostolic church.

About the time, however, that I began to feel that I was prepared to meet all comers in the arena of debate, I found myself in perplexity as to the validity of some of the dear old doctrines. The very diligence with which I studied, discussed, and preached the old theological dogmas led me to discover that most of them were without any foundation in fact, and without any justification in reason or experience.

I re-examined the Bible in the light of historical criticism, and readjusted my theology, and as a result I found myself at the age of thirty, after fourteen years of orthodoxy, ready to enter the

ministry of the Free Church. And I felt as those Israelites must have felt, who had struggled and fought through the perilous way of the Wilderness, and found themselves at last on the borders of the Promised Land.

THREE STAGES OF GROWTH

Any one who has experienced the full transition from a genuinely orthodox position to a genuinely modern and liberal one has experienced three stages of growth, and three states of mind corresponding to them. There are people all around us who represent one or the other of those stages of growth. I will therefore undertake to describe them, because it may help us all to understand the religious situation, and may help some of us to understand ourselves.

1. *The Traditional Stage.* The first I will call the traditional stage. It corresponds to the level of attainment represented by the common orthodoxy of the time. The state of mind which goes with it is one of passive conformity. It receives without question whatever tradition says is true.

People who mature,— or whose development is arrested at this stage of growth,— are always saying, "My mother's religion is good enough for me." They are willing to abide by the doctrines of the good old church in which they happened to be born. They ask no questions, propound no problems. Common usage decides everything for such people.

My own experience of this state of mind was just sufficient to enable me to know what it is. I remember in my earliest youth wondering at the marvelous

wisdom which enabled Alexander Campbell of all the men living in the world to know just what was apostolic Christianity. But I soon found myself in an attitude of defense. I felt that anyone who was fortunate enough to be reared in the "nuture and admonition" of a church which was the sole heir of divine truth should be ready at all times to give a reason for the hope that was in him. My efforts to find a reason for each and every item of the faith led to consequences which I did not then anticipate.

2. *The Transitional Stage.* The second I will call the transitional stage. It is the stage of growth through which we pass normally as the result of an intellectual awakening. When we arrive at intellectual self-consciousness we begin to question everything. We ask "why?" and "wherefore?" and we are no longer able to accept our beliefs passively, as they are handed down to us by tradition. We must verify everything for ourselves. And we should always do this, whether we remain in the church of our fathers, or find it necessary to seek a larger and freer fellowship. We should as individuals know what we believe, and why we believe it, from personal investigation and experience. Even if we believe as our father believed, we should know why; and our convictions should be our own. So long as we receive our beliefs passively, we are not yet individualized, and we really have no religion of our own.

The chief danger which attends the transition from orthodoxy to freedom in religion is the danger of falling into a skeptical, doubting, or merely negative, attitude of mind.

When you are forced by your own investigations and reflections to admit for the first time that the teachings which have been handed down to you as of divine authority are without any foundation in fact, you begin to wonder whether anything at all can be true. You feel for a time as if the earth were reeling under your feet, and the stars were falling from heaven. Your courage, your insight, your intellectual resources are severely tested.

Some people, indeed, are so utterly overwhelmed by the discovery that orthodoxy is not finally true that they subside into reactionary indifference or deadly apathy. It is not, however, a sign of extraordinary originality to give up the ghost at this point. The faith of your fathers may come short of the truth; and yet something vastly greater and grander may still be true.

If you advance steadily and courageously you will soon arrive at a new and higher stage of progress; you will be reconciled to the larger situation, and you will be a thousand times recompensed for all of your intellectual trials.

3. *The Positive or Spiritual Stage.* The next stage of experience I will call the positive or spiritual stage. It is the stage of reconstruction, of positive growth, and of lofty and final spiritual realizations.

After I had sloughed off the old theology I found that all of the essential facts of life remained as before. The world went serenely on, and the heavens did not fall. I discovered that I had lost nothing except a few out-grown theological dogmas. Furthermore I discovered that all of the real and vital

problems of life remained; while I could no longer accept the old solutions, the problems themselves persisted, demanding new and better solutions. In short, I soon discovered that when we have found out what is not true, we have made but a small beginning; by far the larger task of finding out what is true still lies before us. This larger and more alluring task of finding out what is true is the great work of a positive spiritual philosophy of life.

And let me assure you, my friends, in whatever stage of growth or state of mind you may be, that we are of small value to the cause of Free Religion until we have reached the positive, spiritual stage or level of attainment.

Having indicated the states of mind through which any one must pass on his way from orthodoxy to freedom, let us now consider a few of the problems which the mind encounters in the process of transition.

AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

The first question which forces itself upon the mind, newly awakened, is the one of authority in religion. How shall we know truth from error? How shall we finally determine what is true in religion? The old way was to settle all questions or try to settle them by an appeal to the Bible. The doctrine of the Bible with which I was familiar from my youth is the one common among orthodox Christians, namely, that the Bible is the Word of God, written by inspired prophets and apostles, and is therefore the final authority, indeed the sole

authority, in all matters of faith and practice. This doctrine of the Bible as the seat of authority in religion is the very foundation of orthodox theology.

When I had re-examined the Bible in the light of the modern historical criticism, and had thoroughly satisfied myself that the literature of the Bible was produced in the same natural way in which all great literature is produced, and that the Bible is therefore a purely human production, I discovered as a matter of course that the foundation had utterly and inevitably disappeared from under the structure of my cherished system of theology, which I had been preparing myself to defend against all comers.

I soon realized, however, that I had been able to find out the truth about the Bible by the normal exercise of my own reason, and insight, and conscience. I discovered that I had, without realizing it, been obliged to judge the Bible itself by the application of an inner and higher standard of judgment. In short, I discovered that the seat of authority in religion is, and of necessity must be, within man himself.

If we cannot find out what is true by the normal and free exercise of our native intellectual powers and spiritual perceptions, then we cannot find out what is true; there are no two ways about it. I believe, however, that we can know the truth; and I believe that our intellectual equipments are for no other purpose.

THE ESSENTIALS OF RELIGION

In the reconstruction of my thought on the subject of religion I discovered that all of those doctrines

which were grounded merely upon texts of scripture, and had no foundation in reason or experience were untenable; they could not survive the application of the new test of truth in religion.

An appalling array of doctrines, ordinances, and forms of thought and speech had to go. The belief in the miraculous creation of the world and of all things therein within the space of six days, the belief in the creation of man out of the dust of the ground, the doctrine of the fall of man, and the belief in a miraculous "plan of salvation" necessitated by the fall, the barbaric and revolting doctrine of blood atonement, the dogmas of the miraculous birth and of the deity of Jesus, the doctrines of the resurrection of the physical body and of the far-off Day of Judgment, the popular notions of heaven and hell, the superstitious regard for baptism and the Lord's supper, together with a troublesome aggregation of incidental beliefs, notions, customs, usages, and limitations,— all went by the board; and I was heartily glad to see them go. A few score of sermons, prepared in defense of those precious doctrines, had to be sacrificed. I burned them as a thank-offering upon the blazing altar of truth and freedom. And I began the preparation of other sermons which deal with human life and hope and aspiration.

I discovered also, as a matter of deep and vital personal experience, a few of the primary essentials of religious faith.

1. *The Idea of God.* I found that my own inner life yearned for spiritual communion, knowledge, and light. I read the New Testament through, and

marked every passage in which the word "Spirit" occurred, in an effort to find out the secret of the profound spiritual consciousness which pervaded early Christianity. Whatever my conclusions were, my own experience satisfied me that the Spirit in man is athirst for God, for the living God, and cannot be satisfied until it has found the Source from which the river of life forever flows.

I have arrived at the conviction that God is an Omnipresent Spirit, and that "in Him we live and move and have our being." This idea of God may be vastly different from the one which I gained from a study of the "Jehovah" of the Old Testament; but it is, to say the least, commensurate with modern ideas of the universe, and of the laws of life.

2. *The Divinity of Man.* I found also that I could not be satisfied without a deeper and more vital knowledge of Man. The question, "What is Man?" becomes more and more insistent, and gains vastly in significance as our experience deepens and broadens. At first I assumed the doctrine of the potential divinity of man as a working hypothesis, believing intuitively that all essential truths will demonstrate themselves in our experience as we advance from day to day. The result has been that my own faith in the native divinity of the true Self of man has increased and intensified from year to year. I believe that we are all the sons of God: all potentially divine; and that all true progress is simply the natural unfoldment and manifestation of the divinity within.

3. *The Certainty of the Future.* My profound

and growing belief in the divine nature of man necessitates my belief in the certainty of the future. I believe that the Spirit, the true Self in man, is just as deathless, just as beginningless and endless as God. I believe with Walt Whitman, that,—

> "No man has ever been half devout enough,
> None has ever adored or worshipped half enough,
> None has begun to think how divine he himself is,
> AND HOW CERTAIN THE FUTURE IS."

THE PASSING AND THE PERMANENT IN RELIGION

Another important lesson I have learned from personal experience. I have learned the difference between the passing and the permanent in religion. The outer form perishes; the inner soul remains and abides forever. I have seen practically every doctrine and every form, which I adopted from custom in the beginning of my ministry, utterly fail and pass away; and yet I retain at this moment a firmer hold upon the vital and essential principles of religion than ever I had before.

True religion consists in a few living spiritual principles which vindicate themselves progressively in human experience, — principles which are independent of all forms, and survive all changes and all revolutions in the world of speculative thought.

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS

There are a few personal qualifications without which progress in religious knowledge is impossible. The old law of apperception so tersely stated by Jesus, "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that

which he seemeth to have," is the fundamental law of religious growth.

The most essential personal qualifications for spiritual growth are honesty, courage, and candor, intellectual hospitality, spiritual insight, and an unquenchable thirst for truth.

The wise man said:

> "Yea, if thou cry after discernment;
> And lift up thy voice for understanding;
> If thou seek her as silver,
> And search for her as for hid treasures;
> Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,
> And find the knowledge of God."

Seeking honestly we cannot fail to find the truth, and living up to the light we have, more light is sure to be revealed, Above all, have the courage of your convictions. Dare to exercise your right and your capacity to think. Do not accept any doctrine merely upon authority. You should have, and you do have, a sacred oracle within, whose decisions, if not always final or infallibly wise, should be at least honest, candid, and sincere. And when you have found, as you must find, a larger and purer vision of truth, then for your own sake, and for the sake of the world which still lingers in the valley and shadow of death, proclaim your faith, let your light shine before men. Though your new creed should contain but a single article, proclaim it with the courage of a Hebrew prophet.

> "Ye who have whispered truth, whisper no longer;
> Speak as the tempest speaks sterner and stronger."

Do not fear, my friends, to let the old dogmas go.

When you have tested them by the new and living standard of reason and experience and have found them wanting in truth and in life-giving power, you need not fear to let them fall from you. Your petty theologians may try to make you believe that the very heavens would fall and the foundations of eternity be shaken if the old faith should fail. But I assure you that the old temple of faith has already failed. Its foundations have shifted, and its walls are tottering; but while the old structure built on sand cannot survive the storm and the flood, the possibility of a new habitation of faith, built upon the bed-rock foundation of human intelligence and experience, is being demonstrated.

THE VALUE OF FREEDOM IN RELIGION

Now let us by no means fail to realize the value of freedom in religion. No individual can grow, no church can grow, without freedom. We must be free to reject old error, free to receive new and larger revelations of truth. When I had worked my way out of orthodox theology, and was not allowed to declare my honest convictions in an orthodox pulpit, I longed most of all for an open forum in which I could declare my honest thought, in a candid appeal to honest men. I found the freedom I sought in the Unitarian Church. And I say that a fellowship in which thought is free and spiritual life is unfettered may render a service to the world which no human capacity can estimate. Orthodoxy deprives itself of light by stoning the prophets, and refusing the new revelations of truth. Let us at least be warned

by the consequences of such blindness, obduracy, and exclusive bigotry.

I have briefly stated my own experience in the hope that I may help others in their natural growth out of the old legalistic faith received by tradition from the fathers, into the new and living religion of the Spirit, whose inspirations are of present duty and of future joy.

And let me assure you, that religion is of necessity a personal experience. You or I may carry a torch at whose flame other torches may be lighted; but no one is truly religious until his own soul kindles and glows with the mystic fire, and he goes forth himself to become a prophet and priest of the Most High, ministering divine truth and heavenly light to the souls of men.

PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

[No. 273]

TWENTIETH CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D.

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

The American Unitarian Association was Founded in 1825 with the Following Expressed Purpose

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

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TWENTIETH CENTURY CHRISTIANITY.

The universal acceptance of the theory of descent with modification since "The Origin of Species" was published in 1859, the recent triumphs of chemistry and physics, especially in their biological connections, the rapid progress of democracy since the American Revolution, and the carrying into effect not generally, yet frequently, of the doctrine of human brotherhood, have modified profoundly the thinking world's religious conceptions. Thoughtful people have dismissed the anthropomorphic ideas of God as monarch, king, or Lord of Hosts, with all the imperial and feudal-system ideas of God which have so long prevailed not only among the masses of mankind, but among the intellectual leaders of the race. No ideas about God have changed so much, however, as the ideas about him as creator. The doctrine of evolution represents creation, whether of the heavenly bodies or of plants and animals, not as a piece of work done once for all by an infinite artificer in a short time, and then left to run automatically on a predetermined scheme called natural law, but as growing or gradually developing, and having an immense historic past, a fluent present, and an unmeasured future. No thinking person now accepts as anything but primitive myth or fanciful poetry the story of the Garden of Eden, or the portrait of God in the second chapter

of Genesis as a being who formed man out of the dust of the ground, as a child fashions an image out of snow or clay. The Creator is for modern men a sleepless, active energy and will, which yesterday, today, and forever actuates all things, as the human spirit actuates its own body, so small and yet so inconceivably complex.

By savage man the gods were recognized chiefly in the irresistible catastrophes of nature, in the lightning, the earthquake, the flood and the drought, the volcano, and the mighty wind. Twentieth-century people recognize God chiefly in the wonderful energies of sound, light, and electricity, in the vital processes of plants and animals, in human loves and aspirations, and in the evolution of human society. Through the application of the inductive method the human race has within a hundred years gained the power of applying prodigious natural forces to beneficent human uses. In so doing it has obtained great spiritual advantages in new conceptions of God and nature. The thought of God as monarch or king is inconsistent with the nineteenth-century revelation of him through the achievements of natural science. He now appears as incessant workman, as universal servant, as tireless, omniscient energizer. Is this thought of God, unchristian? Not if we accept literally two sublime sentences in the New Testament, one uttered by Jesus and the other by Paul,—"God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," and "In him we live and move and have our being."

Democracy has produced a great change in the popular conception of the human ruler. So long as the ruler held his place by right of strength and prowess or by right of birth, he was often deified by the multitude, and so became the type of the god or gods. All through the Middle Ages the feudal system supplied the popular conception of the kingdom of heaven; and indeed, to this day the commonest conceptions of God's kingdom are based on feudal-system creations and practices. The intimate connection between Church and State, which has come down through unnumbered centuries and exists today in most nations, was natural and inevitable, so long as rulers held by divine right and God was only a magnified human ruler.

Into this obdurate mass of inherited opinion and tradition has burst democracy, and particularly American democracy, with its complete separation between Church and State. Democracy regards its rulers as selected servants. It respects them because they represent for the time being the mind and power of the nation. It loves them only if they turn out on trial to be worthy of love; that is, serviceable, honorable, humane, and inspiring. It thinks of them as leaders rather than rulers, and is heartily glad when they turn out to be capable of leadership. Democracy thinks of government as an agency it has itself created for directing and performing various kinds of work for the people's benefit, and not for the special benefit of any ruling class or fraction of the community. Government is, or ought to be, a per-

vasive, incessant, industrious promoter of the common welfare. The real power behind government in these days is what is called public opinion, and that government is best which is so constructed that it can give effect to the genuine, well-considered opinion of the mass of the thinking people. Hence the supreme importance of universal education in a democracy. This conception of government and of public opinion as the spring of governmental action is inconsistent with the ancient thought of God, but perfectly consistent with the modern thought of him.

The best observers of the social revolution which has been going on in Europe and America during the past hundred years agree that democracy has been the most powerful force in the great movement,— a force disintegrating, dissolving, and in some sense destructive, yet in high degree constructive, fore-reaching, and vitalizing. It wars against ancient authorities and traditions, but sets up a new and better authority of its own creation. Its attitude towards religion has been generally unfriendly, because the official Christian Church has been for many centuries an ally of the governing classes, and has been organized in the largest Christian bodies on lines of aristocracy or privilege, or in ranks or orders which exercise a sacred domination. Ever since the Protestant Reformation the Christian Church, considered as an institution possessing legal privileges and a special authority over the minds and lives of its members, has been in a declining state as regards power or influence; but the rate of this decline has been greatly

quickened during the past century of democracy,—and the end is not yet. With any established church democracy is inevitably at war; but under democratic institutions churches supported by voluntary contributions and endowments may flourish exceedingly in great variety, as they do in the United States. It is not, therefore, religion against which democracy contends, but the ancient establishments of religion which have long been in possession of special privileges and peculiar authorities. The most democratic nation may be profoundly influenced by a church which, possessing no privileges, knows how to stir the hearts of the common people.

The American democracy, which is to a large extent unchurched, manifests a remarkable indifference to many dogmas, formulas, observances, and rites which have had great historic significance in the development of Christianity. The democracy feels no interest whatever in the old dogmas about transubstantiation, predestination, vicarious atonement, or apostolic succession. It takes no side in these discussions, and is incapable of being interested in them. In this respect the mass of young democrats in any Christian country closely resemble the thinking Chinese and Japanese, who find it quite impossible to understand or take any interest in the theological discussions which still seem important to many Christian missionaries in those fields. Dogmas or creeds which have been matters of life and death in Christian lands for centuries seem to the Chinese or Japanese who are thinking of becoming Christians to be matters of no im-

portance and no interest. In like manner a democratic society turns its back on the Christian propaganda which gradually took form in the first five centuries of the Christian era, and then came down from generation to generation without essential change for nearly thirteen centuries more.

The spirit which actuates men of science reinforces the spirit of democracy in modern society. As a rule, men of science have scant respect for tradition or for any authority which is founded on age or acceptance by former generations. They are intensely individualistic, and have little sympathy with the privileged classes or with the traditional or consecrated systems of crystallized or deposited truth. As a rule, men of science have no faith in magic or miracle. They have a passion for truth and fact, but no liking for mere speculation or for theories based solely on men's intuitions. Nevertheless, they are liberal and comprehensive in their ideas of truth and fact; and so they put religion itself, the history of mankind, and the history of language into the region of truth and fact, where men of the most scientific spirit and perfect candor may labor with profit. In this sense the religions of the world are a legitimate field for scientific investigation. Of course, that religion will be most sympathetically explored which seems to the explorer to have been of most service to human society. Men of science also include, among proper fields for scientific investigation, the whole field of man's mental operations, emotions, and passions in regard to their sources, inter-relations, and reciprocal effects. Cau-

tious experimenters, therefore, study with increasing amplitude and success the reactions of mind and body, of mind on mind, and of one will on another will. In other words, science affirms rationality, and believes that man's whole nature is attuned to the nature of the universe and its God.

In these two prodigious forces—democracy and the spirit of scientific inquiry by the inductive method—there is a common element which is of fundamental importance,— the element of freedom, a freedom which is more than a personal right to think or speak as one pleases. It is the primary condition of existence for both democracy and science and for all their devotees. It is the condition of all scientific and all democratic achievement. It is both the condition and the result of finding the truth. No prophetic utterance can ever be more completely fulfilled than the prophecy, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," has already been. For four hundred years the real advance of the white race has been towards freedom, freedom of all sorts, in the family, in industries, and in government,— more and more freedom for the child, the woman, and the man; and the two great servants of freedom have been democracy and science. The Christian churches as organized in hierarchies, synods, councils or convocations, though never a unit in action, have heretofore counted for the most part on the other side; but, since the Protestant Reformation, several Christian churches or denominations have been undergoing a process of

evolution which will soon land them frankly and completely on the side of freedom.

So absolute, steadfast, and unstayed has been the march of freedom, civil, religious, and social, during the past one hundred years, that we may safely infer, concerning the future, that those authorities and forces, old or new, which are inconsistent with essential and disinterested freedom will in long process of time undergo liberal modifications or even cease to be used. There will be from time to time reactions in favor of authority and privilege, but they will surely be temporary and ineffectual. In the same way the influence of trades-unionism and socialism, agencies which cherish democratic ideals and on the whole have furthered the democratic movement in the nineteenth century, may decline in the twentieth, because some of their policies and methods are clearly inconsistent with a rational individualism and an unselfish liberty, and the despotic and oppressive elements in these organizations may come to dominate the liberal. For a like reason monopolies in industries and trade will be successfully resisted, since they cripple free competition and block progress. In like manner those churches will survive which best organize free co-operative good-will for beneficent action in this world. Christianity, renouncing its connection with governments and oligarchic institutions, will become the cordial ally of intelligent democracy and progressive science, and the most effective promoter of freedom, truth, justice, individualism, and human brotherhood. How far society has already come on this road towards liberty

we realize when we recall that all the ancient civilizations were founded on human slavery, and that force was in them the one source of authority. As liberty has increased, the use of force has diminished, until we begin to understand that the force used in the society of the future will be the force which protects ignorance and feebleness, resists evil propensities in individuals or groups, and defends man against adverse nature and his own injurious impulses. Those who delight in force, and in the manly virtues which are often developed in using force, need not fear that the civilization of the future will dispense with force and its hardy virtues. Man's conflict with nature and with his own defects and vices will forever give ample employment for many kinds of protective force, and for human daring, endurance, and self-sacrificing comradeship.

A third doctrine which is fast modifying the religious conceptions of mankind is not new, but newly applied, the doctrine of human brotherhood. Jesus taught it explicitly and implicitly, and the Christian Church has talked a good deal about it, but never put it into effective practice until democracy began to come to its own. It is expressed with wonderful perfection in the following sentence which Lowell quotes from Robinson and Brewster: "We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation of which we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other's good, and of the whole;" but this solemn teaching of Robinson

and Brewster did not come to perfect fruition in the Plymouth Colony, and has never yet been realized in any human society. The past fifty years, however, have witnessed more progress toward the realization of the brotherhood of man than all the preceding centuries of the Christian era. This progress is seen in the wide-spread interest in all the means of improving the moral and physical health of all classes of the community, in the better distribution of the products of faithful industry, in the ethics of all business, large and small, productive and distributive, and in the purpose to give the entire people a sound and effective education. A sympathetic, merciful, and disinterested regard for the less fortunate members of the race, carried into action and affecting politics, government, and industries, has characterized all the progressive peoples in Europe and America during the last fifty years, whatever their form of government, and promises to bring in a new era of peace and good-will. As yet, the Orient has scarcely felt this new impulse towards carrying into practice this sentiment of brotherhood. The many social forces which are working to give effect to this prevailing sentiment are scattered and often not well organized; but they are all benevolent, and they work to one end. The organizations which foster the sentiment of brotherhood have leaders, seers, and prophets, but not rulers. They proceed from the loving emotions of multitudes. They take gradual effect on multitudes, and these effects will tell more and more on the social organization of mankind as time goes on. It is a

work which goes forward without haste, without rest, just as we think the work we call God's goes on. It is, indeed, a part of God's incessant beneficence, a comparatively new part.

These new forces which have so deeply affected the religious conceptions of modern men may seem to tend to take individuality and personality out of our conception of God. They are vast imaginings of omnipresent energy, far removed from the anthropomorphic conception of God as magistrate, enthroned potentate, and God of Battles. It is to be observed, however, that during the period which has witnessed all this progress in science, democracy, and the sense of brotherhood, the regard of mankind for individual persons and mankind's sense of obligation to persons of rare merit have not diminished, but increased. We of today recognize our obligations to leading spirits more clearly and comprehensively than our ancestors did. We have quite as strong an admiration as they felt for the prophets, seers, and saints of the past, and quite as strong a gratitude towards our own heroes as they had towards theirs; and we have the advantage of being grateful to many more persons, because universal education enables the passing generation to include great writers of any generation among their benefactors and guides. Human love goes out now as ever to esteemed persons in the family, the state, and the race. The sense of personality, the belief in personality, is an inherent part of our nature, which always has been and always will be, intense and irresistible. Therefore, so long as man is man, God

will be thought of as a person, and will have a name significant beyond all other names. Taking into consideration all the new demonstrations of science with regard to the attributes of God, no name so well describes him as *Our Father* among all those peoples who conceive of a father as the loving head of a family.

None of the advances of science and government have any adverse effect on the conception of Jesus as teacher and exemplar. The sciences have their own prophets, martyrs, and heroes, for whom all worthy scientific men feel profound reverence. Literature and art have their great masters, whose works survive for centuries, and long continue profoundly to influence select human spirits. Jesus, the amazing product of the Hebrew race and of the Hebraic history and tradition, is the supreme teacher of religion, whose teachings, imperfectly transmitted by the groups of simple people to whom he spoke in the language and the atmosphere of an obscure province, and soon corrupted in the great Greek and Roman world, have, nevertheless, proved to be the undying root of all the best in human history since he lived. For this personality the love and reverence of mankind are always ascending and always glowing with greater warmth and brilliancy, as the clouds which gathered out of paganism round his doctrines are gradually dispelled.

The Church of the future will reverence more and more the personality of Jesus, and will dwell on the extraordinary qualities of his teaching, as proved by their historical effects during nineteen centuries. He

laid down ethical principles of the purest worth which are good for all time, but which were so crushed and overborne by the existing currents of thought and the social institutions of his day that they have been struggling for recognition ever since they were uttered, and still lack their intended fruition. To strive patiently towards their just fruition is the mission of the Church of the future.

You perceive that I have been giving you reasons for the belief that the form of Christianity most likely to be accepted widely in the generations to come is the form familiar to the churches represented in this Conference,* and expressed in the formula "The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the leadership of Jesus." This is a form of Christianity which prefers liberty to authority; sees neither deities nor demons in the forces and processes of nature; deifies no human beings; is not propitiatory, sacrificial, or expiatory; relieves man from irrational terrors; relies on reason and hope; has ministers and pastors, but no mediatorial priests; recognizes and resists sins, wrongs, and evils; and looks death in the face; but dwells chiefly on goodness, life, and love. I am thinking, of course, not of present external appearances and immediate issues, but of strong undercurrents of thought and feeling, and of age-long movements in which countless minds and wills, and many religious bodies will take part.

On those who have inherited, or won for them-

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*General Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches, at Buffalo, N. Y., October 6-9, 1913.

selves, this blessed faith, are there not laid certain clear obligations towards fellow-men? We Unitarian laymen, and our predecessors in the liberal faith, have generally been content to let our reverend preachers and writers penetrate the dark places of traditional theology, and to trust the Unitarian doctrine and practice to leaven the inert mass of archaic religious opinion. The penetration has been accomplished, and the leaven has worked wonderfully. Not only exact science and politics give support to our view of religion, but also recent economics, the new historical writings, and most of recent literature in both prose and verse, including all the greatest. These influences are silent and undemonstrative, but effective. They work without effort or sacrifice on our part. Does not the spirit of the times call on us for vigorous collective action in propagating the faith that is in us? Let us here highly resolve that we will teach our descendants carefully the doctrines we value; that we will maintain and secure to the future, so far as the shifting conditions of American life permit, the churches which have been already established as centers of toleration, freedom, and simplicity in religion; that we will plant new churches wherever a promising group of adherents can be gathered together; that we will take vigorous part in every public-spirited, well-directed movement to promote co-operative good-will among men; that we will provide for the thorough education of our ministers, and see to it that they have a dignified maintenance in the country as well as in the cities; that we will welcome to our churches the

ministers and laymen of other denominations who have seen the light that shines for us; and that we will set before inquirers in foreign lands where Christianity is comparatively unknown the Christian gospel as we understand it.

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Some of the best of the older books on the list of the American Unitarian Association have been added to this library, the purpose of which is to make available at a very low price excellent books of large and permanent worth. Not a few of these volumes bear the names of some of the greatest of Unitarian writers, and this group of books forms, for the most part, a library of the "great affirmations" of the Unitarian faith.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Individuals desiring to co-operate with this Association may receive a certificate of Associate Membership by signing an application card (sent on request to the Associate Department) and the payment of one dollar. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of..... dollars, the principal to be securely invested and the income to be used to promote the work of the Association.

[No. 274]

HE IS RISEN

THE EASTER TALE AND THE EASTER TRUTH

BY

REV. ALEXANDER IRVINE INNES

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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HE IS RISEN

THE EASTER TALE AND THE EASTER TRUTH

"He is risen." "He is risen indeed." These words used to be the common salutation and response when people met on Easter Day. The custom of greeting each other in this fashion prevailed in England up till about the close of the sixteenth century, and, if now we were in Russia, or in any other land where most of the people belong to the Greek Church, we should hear those words at Easter all day long, in the streets, or wherever we might go. When two persons meet, one of them says, "He is risen," and the other replies, "He is risen indeed." These sayings refer, of course, to the story of the resurrection of Jesus, and are meant as expressions of joy.

But what has the name of Easter got to do with that resurrection? In its origin, nothing whatever. It reminds us how paganism at various times influenced Christianity in regard to external matters, and how the Church endeavored to give a Christian significance to such popular rites as could not be rooted out. But we seldom give a thought to the pagan origin of the name or the festival, because these things have had familiar use so long in the Christian vocabulary and church observance. Though the name of a Saxon deity is attached to the springtide rejoicing of those who acknowledge the leadership of

Jesus, it is always he who is thought of in the celebration of Easter. Those words "He is risen," which we first read in the Gospels, form the keynote of the whole range of emotions that make music in our hearts at this time.

The legend of the bodily resurrection may not inaptly be called the material presentment of a spiritual truth, or perhaps the coarse husk that covers a precious kernel. We accept the spirit of the main part of the ancient narratives as indicating, through symbol, an important fact, while at the same time our reason and our knowledge of God's unchanging laws compel us to reject the materialistic embodiment which seems to have been needed in those days to sustain the chief hope of the crucified one's followers, and to satisfy the popular craving for signs and wonders. It is easy to understand how the twin stories of resurrection and ascension came into being. The vital expectation of those who had followed Jesus was that he would rise from the grave, ascend to heaven, and in their lifetime return with a host of angels, to judge and rule the world. Those who looked for this could not possibly believe that from Calvary he had passed to Sheol, the shadowy abode of the dead; for then their faith would have perished, their glorious vision of the coming time would have dissolved in darkness and despair. No doubt, they honestly believed that Jesus must have risen, that he must have ascended; and how quickly the expression of this conviction, passing from mouth to mouth, would be changed to the plain assertion that he had

risen and had ascended! The expectant multitude would eagerly accept the statement, especially when supported by the fact, if fact it was, that the corpse had vanished from the grave.

For more than forty years the story was the engrossing subject of conversation among the Christians before it was written down from hearsay, and in another language, in the earliest of the Gospels. We may readily imagine how, during that long period, explanations of various problems were suggested, and gradually adopted and added as credited particulars, until the narrative assumed the form in which it was heard by the writer of Mark. Indeed, when we compare his account with the later writings in Luke and Matthew, we find ample proof of the growth of the legend in the Gospels themselves. And this growth in the intervening periods is just as natural as that which took place before.

Now on what ground do we refuse belief in the bodily resurrection and ascension? One of the thirty-nine "Articles of Religion" asserts that "Christ did truly rise again from death and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; wherewith he ascended into heaven and there sitteth." We might say, simply and bluntly, that we reject these statements because we do not believe in miracles; that is, in God's breaking of his own "laws of nature." Well, that would be a short cut to the end. But is it not advisable to examine the evidence that is offered? We must remember that it is upon the gospel narratives that the

majority of Christians base the creeds in which they assert the physical resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Therefore it is well to scrutinize the testimony, and see what its value really is, our one desire being to make sure of knowing the truth.

The first thing we observe is the agreement of the Synoptic Gospels in saying that, when the women came to the tomb with spices to anoint the dead body, they did not find it there. We may accept the statement as accurate. But it does not prove that the body had come to life and walked out of the cavern. The reasonable supposition is that it had been quietly and tenderly removed by loving friends. This may have been done by Joseph of Arimathæa, who placed it there, and who is not reported to have made the least complaint of its removal. Some of the disciples may have removed it with his permission. Or may not the brothers of the Master have taken it away, conveying it in sorrow and secrecy to Galilee, and laying it to rest in the place of his nativity? Who knows but that the dust of Jesus, somewhere among the hills of Nazareth, has risen and blossomed for times innumerable in the glory of the crimson lilies that he loved?

As soon as we pass from the subject of the empty grave, we discover that the gospel narratives are in hopeless disagreement. According to Mark, the women find that "the stone is rolled back" "from the door of the tomb," and they see "a young man, sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe." In the twenty or thirty years intervening between the writ-

ing of Mark and that of Luke the legend grows; for in Luke, while we are again told that the women "found the stone rolled away from the tomb," we find that the "young man" has risen to his feet and has been doubled,—"Behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel." Then the writer of Matthew, coming a little later, finds the legend again enlarged: this time the stone is not rolled away before the women arrive, but its removal is witnessed, and the supernatural and miraculous are introduced: "Behold, there was a great earthquake; and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it; his appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow." How different from the first account!

The writer of Mark does not know anything about a guard having been set over the tomb; neither does the writer of Luke; it is not till the writing of Matthew that this addition appears. Why it should have been made is inexplicable, for the members of the guard are useless as witnesses. They do not testify that the body disappeared without the breaking of the seal on the stone; or that they knew anything as to the stone being rolled away; or that they saw an angel descending from heaven, or two men standing in dazzling apparel, or even one man sitting in a white robe; or that there was an earthquake, either great or small. Their statement is that, while they slept in the night, the disciples of Jesus stole the body away. It would be rather foolish of sleepers thus to say that they knew who did what was done

while they slept; but the story that disciples took the body was so likely that surely there was no need to bribe the guard to tell it—if there was a guard at all. According to Matthew, the story was general among the Jews in his time, though we see that it was unknown to the writers of Mark and Luke. When we thus compare the resurrection narratives, it becomes obvious, from their irreconcilable differences, that they represent successive stages in the growth of a tradition, which the popular imagination continued to embellish till all was written down in its final form.

As to the alleged physical appearances of Jesus after his death and burial, the first thing we notice is that there is no mention of them in Mark as originally completed: their record begins in the appendix of later date, consisting of the last twelve verses, and then the process of expansion is seen again in Luke and Matthew. Some of the appearances may have had a certain mental actuality, being what psychology terms a photism, like Paul's vision on the way to Damascus; but, as soon as we begin to examine them in detail, they fall to pieces, there being no direct testimony to support any of them.

Then there is the ascension story. In the Mark appendix it is that Jesus "was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." Who can believe that any one on earth saw him sit down at the right hand of God in heaven, the supposed heaven above the sky? As a matter of fact, the writer does not say that this was seen, or that the "receiving up"

was seen: his words are only an expression of belief that these things took place. The same remark applies to the statement in Luke, that Jesus "was carried up into heaven,"—a statement which does not appear in some of the earliest manuscripts of that Gospel. So we see that the ascension is not set forth as a witnessed occurrence, but simply as a belief. Reason forbids us to share in this belief; we could not have shared in it even if the alleged bodily ascension of Jesus had been as vividly described as the alleged bodily ascension of Elijah.

Just one point more in connection with the gospel evidence. Let us look for the ascension in Matthew. It is not there; no, not a word of it. In the latest of the three writings the legend has not only ceased to grow, but the ascension part has been dropped. Why? Because the hope it represented, and in which it originated, had died. Seventy or eighty years had elapsed since the awful day of the crucifixion, and there had been no second coming of the Master in fulfilment of his followers' eager expectation. He had not descended: why, then, should they longer think that he ascended? Out of their disappointment and resignation there arose a finer belief,—the belief that his spirit remained with them; that out of death he had risen and come to them as a living influence, though not as a bodily presence. And this thought it is that the writer of Matthew lays upon the lips of Jesus in the last words of that Gospel, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Thus, while we find ourselves justified in

rejecting the materialistic resurrection and ascension as non-historical, irrational, and incredible, we find that we have reached a glorious truth,—the rise and advent of the Christ-spirit in the world.

In the depth of legend our Teacher has been long entombed: in his resurrection from tradition we rejoice. It is true,—it always has been true in the larger sense, even from that tragic day at Golgotha,—"He is risen, he is risen indeed," and not ascended to any remote heaven, but acting on earth as a ceaseless energy. He was not carried away beyond the clouds as a spent force that would never again be felt in the world till the world's end, but was destined to be a lasting influence among men, growing more powerful all the way up through the rising centuries, and still working for the coming of the kingdom of God. The Christ-spirit walks this planet as its master-spirit, the greatest of the prophet-souls, the most God-like power in humanity, impelling the human to rise ever higher into the divine character.

No cross could destroy, no grave could imprison, that life of light to the world. "Behold, the place where they laid him;" ay, but truly he is not there. They may show you what they call the holy sepulchre, or put before you what they say are fragments of the and sat do hich his hands and feet were nailed, but believe that ano trace of him; for he is in the hearts the right hand of d sisters, of all lovers of the good, above the sky? As aple that stirs their feelings and not say that this was sel moulds their character. A

resurrection? Yes, a wonderful resurrection, out of the dark and bitter depths of persecution and agony and death, the whole of that dreadful tragedy which seemed to be utter failure, final collapse, absolute destruction of the Master and his cause.

Caiaphas and the priestly court never dreamed how vain was their triumph, or how mistaken were their calculations of the effect which it would have upon religion. Had not they carried their plans to perfect success? Had not they made an end of this pestilent heretic, this presumptuous artisan from a Galilean village, who, with his handful of rustic followers, had gone about from place to place disturbing the minds of the people on questions of religion, and had dared at last to come to Jerusalem, and even in the temple preach new things as more important than the sacred ceremonial which was maintained by those who sat in the seat of Moses? Where was this Nazarene now? Had not he been brought to a death of shame, and were not his followers affrighted and scattered, and his revolutionary principles stamped out forever? Surely, thought the High Priest, no more would be heard of this petty rebellion against ecclesiastical authority.

But where is that Caiaphas now? Where is he who was the head and forefront of success? He may not be, as in Dante's "Vision," forever "fixed to a cross with three stakes on the ground," and trodden on by all who walk that way; but he lingers in history as a name of scorn, a byword for bigotry, a caitiff who bribed the betrayer and crucified the truth.

It was not he, but his victim, who was to be the real victor. The risen Christ, the deathless spirit,—who rose from the cross, not from the grave he never entered,—went forth into the world conquering and to conquer. He became the mightiest religious force in the most enlightened lands,—he who had been killed as an enemy to religion,—and in no long process of time the head of the most powerful religious organization in the world was proud to call himself the Vicar of Christ, while at the same time the shameful cross was transformed into the venerated symbol of religion pure and undefiled.

What did the haughty Roman think as he contemptuously wrote the title, "The King of the Jews," to be nailed above the head of the alleged malefactor? It was meant as mockery; and in the same mood his boisterous soldiery clothed the martyr in a tawdry purple robe and crowned him with a wreath of thorns. The idea of his being a ruler of men, a king of even the subject Jews, was a matter of jesting and derision. Then his ridiculed sovereignty was supposed to perish on Calvary, while Pilate lived on in the palace with all the pomp of undisputed power. But what is the comparison now? The Roman governor never ruled over more than an insignificant fraction of the number of people who acknowledge the deeper-seated government of the once-despised Nazarene. He has become the ruler of far more than the old Roman Empire, which was indeed the first to bow to him; for he reigns, in spiritual sovereignty, over all that we call the civilized world; the proudest monarchs do him

reverence, the greatest nations call themselves by his name. And, on the other hand, in the gallery of history Pilate stands as little more than a companion picture with Lady Macbeth,—portraits of two murderers, washing their hands.

The very name of Jesus has become an inspiration,—an impulse to purity, truth and righteousness. "Wherever goodness reigneth, the soul of Christ lives on." His spirit animates and impels us to fight against the injustice, the sin, and the suffering that blot the fairness of the life divine in humanity. This spirit is undying; it grows stronger as the years pass by, and makes religion less a belief and more a life, directing it to the doing as well as the thinking, to the working of works of love for all.

From our brother Jesus we derive an invincible faith in the power of the human spirit,—the soul, the mind, the will. He shows us in himself what man can do when he presses up, flower-like, through the darkness of the lower environment into the light of God, and makes himself freely receptive of the divine strength for the divine service. We take heart when we consider what the Master accomplished, and pray his Father and our Father, his God and our God, that, as Paul says, we may "have this mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus." For truly "he is risen,"—risen as the noblest flower of human life, the most beautiful and influential development in the evolution of mankind, the fairest and sweetest blossom that sheds its fragrance in the garden of the heart,

where all the God-gifted poet-and-prophet flowers have their abiding home.

Risen indeed,—risen as the most resplendent star in our spiritual firmament, the lodestar of heaven on earth, a star that both lights and leads. It is said that the star of a night, called the Star of Bethlehem, led the way to the cradle of the infant who has become the world's greatest religious teacher. The star of all the centuries since then, the Star of Nazareth, sheds a benignant light on the souls that see, and leads the way to the holy of holies, the inner sanctuary of loving communion with the Father of all.

Risen,—yes, the real risen life, the re-born spirit of regenerative power, risen in the more abundant life of all who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And the mysterious voice within speaks these words to each of us: You say that he is risen; is he risen in you?

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GOOD MEN IN HELL

A SERMON

By

REV. FRANK S. C. WICKS

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

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"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and policy. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

GOOD MEN IN HELL

If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. Psalm cxxxix, 8.

Every good man wants to go to hell. Only a bad man would want to go to heaven. That is, to the traditional heaven and hell.

If this thought shocks you, at first hearing, I hope it will not be the electric shock that stuns, but that which gives light and illumination.

I believe you will agree with me when you consider the ideas of heaven and hell that dominated Christendom for centuries.

Heaven was thought of as a place of unending bliss. There one found rest and peace. There was no pain, no sorrow, nothing that aroused the need of sympathy; no place for the gentle ministries of compassion; no opportunities for usefulness; only a dead-level, monotonous perfection.

Hell was thought of as a place of unending misery. Piercing cries of human agony rent the air; screams of suffering were heard on every hand. Mr. Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, apparently knew all about it, and he tells us on page 275 of the second series of his sermons, "There is a real fire in hell, as truly as you now have a real body — a fire exactly like that which we have on earth, except this, that it will not consume though it will torture you. You have seen the asbestos lying in the fire red-hot, but when you take it out, it is unconsumed. So your body

will be prepared by God in such a way tha it will burn forever without being consumed.

Jonathan Edwards went even further, sa ing: "The damned shall be tormented in ti presence of the glorified saints. Hereby t saints will be made more sensible how gre their salvation is. The view of the misery the damned will double the ardor of the lo and gratitude of the saints in heaven."

And when he finished, the congregation ma have opened their books, and sung Watt hymn,

"What bliss will fill the ransomed souls,
When they in glory dwell,
To see the sinner as he rolls,
In quenchless flames of hell."

With these alternatives, which will the goo man choose? Can you doubt? Which does h choose here? Does he ask for ease and pe sonal pleasure? Does he go where he can hea no cry of suffering; where he can see no scen of misery?

Never! No human need beckons to him i vain; he is deaf to no cry; he is blind to n misery. He flies from the heavens of eart that he may redeem the hells about him.

Fear might drive a man into the acceptanc of such a heaven, but Love drives a man to th very bottom of hell.

I am quite sure what the man of Nazaret would do. With the first cry of human suffe ing, he would leap from the battlements heaven, and plunge into hell.

That was the kind of a man he was on eart While here he asked for no soft place on whic to lie; he did not seek out palaces and pleasa places; he did not seem to care for good societ or for a good reputation. He associated wit sinners, outcasts, fallen women; he lived an

ate with them; he loved them. And I do not believe his nature has been changed wherever he is. I do not believe he has become like the God that has been worshipped in his name.

The only man fit to be damned is the man who would accept salvation on the old terms. Any man who would purchase a salvation that meant eternal bliss to himself and eternal perdition to his neighbor, is so lost in selfishness that it would take considerable fire to purify his nature.

The Chinese do well to honor as their Madonna, Kwan-yin who refused to enter paradise so long as a single soul was excluded. She exclaimed, "Never will I receive individual salvation!" And to this day she remains outside the gates of paradise.

Do we not admire the conduct of the heathen, Radbod? Charles the Hammer conquered the Frisian chief, and demanded his baptism. Radbod had already immersed one of his royal legs in the font when a thought struck him. Turning suddenly to Bishop Wolfran, he said: "Where are my dead forefathers at present?" The Bishop replied, "In hell, with all other unbelievers." "Mighty well," said Radbod. "Then will I rather feast with my ancestors in the halls of Woden than dwell with your little starveling bands of Christians in heaven." Entreaties and threats could not move him.

Is there a mother, type for us of pure love, who would go to heaven, with her boy writhing in torment? When we love, we exclaim with Burger's Leonore,

> "Salvation is with Wilhelm, yea,
> Without him is but hell."

This fear of hell has been the lash used for driving men into acceptance of certain dogmas.

Every craven, every sneak, every slav responds. But every good man, every one moral fibre, every free man scorns the bargai

Fear of hell never made a good man out a bad man, never fitted anyone for a place happiness.

Love, only, makes good men. The man w loves does not need to have a heaven built f him. He has found it.

If a man wanted good company he wou never go to the traditional heaven. As som one has said, "Heaven for climate; hell f company." In this heaven are to be fou the men and women who can be happy whi others are in woe; here, the men who ca enjoy doing nothing eternally, who can li useless lives contentedly. There is the ma who ruined the maid whom he has sent t perdition. But, at the end of his life of i famy, he has had breath left to say, "I b lieve." There is the man stained with huma blood. His victim had no time to repent, bu during the long trial, he has had time t secure salvation. Do you want to go to suc a place?

On the other hand, see the men who hav been sent to the other place! Their one si has been unbelief. They may have been goo and pure and self-sacrificing; they may hav been loving husbands and good neighbor they may have died trying to save the life another. But they did not believe some do ma, and to hell they have been sent.

Think of the names! There are Guatam Confucius and Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato a Marcus Aurelius; there are the great scientist Newton, Huxley, Darwin and Spencer. course there is no chance for Unitarians; you will find there Wm. Ellery Channin Henry W. Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holme

Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell — all Unitarians. There you will find Sarah Flower Adams, author of "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Down there is Henry Bergh, whose sympathetic heart was always touched by suffering, whether of humankind or of animals; and a place is being prepared for Charles W. Eliot, and the members of this church. Would you not like to be in such company?

The Hindus have a fable that runs: Vishnu spake, "O Bal! Take thy choice: with five wise men shalt thou enter hell, or, with five fools pass into paradise." Gladly answered Bal, "Give me, O Lord, hell with the wise; for that is heaven where wise men dwell, and folly would make of heaven itself a hell."

Father Taylor, the Methodist preacher, had the same idea when he was rebuked for associating with the Unitarian Emerson. A brother preacher said to him, "Do you not know that Emerson is going to hell?" "I suppose so," he replied, "but if Emerson goes to hell, it will change the climate of the place, and turn the tide of emigration that way."

You could not make a hell with the men and women I have named.

Of course, there is no such PLACE as the traditional hell, or the traditional heaven.

Hell is the base spawn of Hate and Fear. Hate and Fear first made a god after their own likeness, and this god made a hell to their liking.

The moment the idea of a good and just God entered the mind, the idea of hell passed out. The two ideas could not live together. As Tennyson wrote:

"The God of Love and Hell together — they
can not be thought."

An old Scotch woman lay on her death-bed. Her minister asked her, "Janet, what would you say, if, after all that He has done for you, God should let you be lost?" "E'en's He likes," was her reply. "If He does, He'll lose mair than I'll do."

God would lose more than she? Yes. She would lose her happiness, but God would lose His character. If He sent that good woman to hell, he would cease being God and become a fiend.

It was this ascription of divine qualities to a being who did such fiendish things that aroused the indignation of John Stuart Mill and made him exclaim, "I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow creatures. And if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go."

If we have left behind us the old ideas of heaven and hell what have we left to our future life? Have we emptied it of all significance?

We do not know the conditions of a future life, but we believe those conditions will be the same as now. The same laws will hold. We see about us heavens and hells, but they are not made by a God who is angry at one moment, and pleased at another. We make them. Heaven and hell are not places but conditions of the human soul. What Christians have failed to see was seen by the Persian poet:

"I sent my soul into the invisible,
Some letter of the after-life to spell.
By and by my soul returned and answered,
'I, myself, am heaven and hell.' "

No good man is in hell; no bad man is in heaven. Wherever the bad man is, he is in hell; wherever the good man is, he is in heaven.

THE MINE AT CALUMET

Excuse me! Be you the dominee
That folks calls Parson Boone?
Wal—Jane an' me hes called to see
Ef you'll ride Monday noon
To Calumet to bury Jim—
James Baker—he is dead—
Death hil too strong a hand for him,
Es you hev often said.

"Perfess?" He didn't perfess. He hed
One simple way all through.
He merely practised, an' he said
That that would hev to do.
"Prayed?" Never—not es I hev known—
'Cept mebby with his han's,
An' 'stead of claspin' of his own
He clasped his feller-man's.

"Under conviction?" The idee!
He never done a thing
To be convicted fer; why, he
Wus straighter than a string.
O, say! He wus a nifty man!
O, he wus brave an' square;
His mighty heart wus bigger than
That meetin' house out there!

Eh? "Jined the church?" You don't ketch
on!
You couldn't a knowed 'im, pard!
To them as did, now he is gone
Your questionin' sounds hard.
told 'em up to town today
"Above the sexton's dirt
Let Parson say his little say:
He can't do any hurt."

"Fire in the Osceola mine!"
  Jim heard the awful cry
That rose from Level 29
  Es he wus passing by,
An' down the burnin' shaft he went
  To where the flames begun,
An' up the half-dead miners sent
  Es fast es skips could run.

Through other drifts he searched around
  An' lying stifled there
A dozen helpless men he found
  An' dragged to light and air.
An' my boy Timothy—my Tim—
  He found, too weak to crawl,
An' got him in the skip—but Jim—
  He didn't come up at all.

We waited fer him all night long
  An' watched an' hil our breath,
A sufferin', tearful, hopeless throng
  Around that pit of death;
An' when the smoke blew out, my son
  Crept down to learn his fate—
He reached him, but the worst wus done—
  He found him—just too late!

He died adoin'
  What he could find to do.
"Did he perfess?" Wal—
  I never knowed him to.
Don't notice if my talk is broke
  An' if my eyes should leak,
'Tain't Tim—nor mother—but the smok
  Hes kinder made 'em weak.

What? "How about his soul?" Look 'ere
  Intendin' no offence,
Your dumb-fool questions does appear
  To show a lack of sense.

If I repeat 'em, like es not
  When you come moseyin' down
You'd find our place most awful hot—
  They'll make you jump the town!

Don't come! Hunt other souls to save!
  His neighbors at the Green
Will gather round Jim Baker's grave
  An' tell the things they've seen.
Ef God don't know what's good and true
  An' wants to punish him,
Why, rather'n go to Heaven with you,
  I'll go to hell with Jim!

—W. A. CROFFUT

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[No. 276]

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

BY

EDWIN MITCHELL SLOCOMBE

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side." LUKE 10:31.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells of a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and was set upon by the brigands, with whom a certain district in Jericho was infested. The man was robbed and seriously wounded and left lying in the street, half dead. In the morning, a priest, on his way, perhaps, to the synagogue, came down the street in which the wounded man was lying, and seeing him, crossed over to the other side of the street and continued on his way.

So far the parable. But we can go further in our imagination, and picture the priest arriving at the synagogue and going through the service of the day with a conscience void of offense. And why not? He is a God-fearing man. He has done none of those things which a righteous man ought not to do. He is not as other men are—extortioners, unjust, licentious, or even as the Publicans who contribute nothing to the support of the Temple. He fasts twice in the week and faithfully fulfills all the requirements of his priestly office. On the side of the street where he walks, he walks blameless before the Law. That is not enough. That is not sufficient. The condemnation of Jesus comes from the other side of the street.

The priest and the Levite are condemned, not for

any evil they have done, but for the good they have left undone. This setting forth of the good life as a life of doing good rather than of merely refraining from doing evil, is characteristic of the teaching of Jesus.

So, in the parable of the Final Day of Judgment, those on the right hand of the King are commended, not for the evil they have avoided, but for the good they have done; and those on the left hand of the King are condemned for the good they have left undone and not for any evil they have done.

So, likewise, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Dives is not charged with any positive act of wrong doing. It is not said that his methods of acquiring riches were unjust or even questionable methods. He is not accused of having done anything to increase the misery of Lazarus. He had done nothing to lessen his misery—that was all. But that was enough, in the judgment of Jesus, to shut him out of the Kingdom of God. In the presence of need, the withholding of help is a sin. That the need is not recognized is no excuse, and may be the very ground of the condemnation.

This teaching, so needed to rebuke the complacent righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, is needed to-day to rebuke our complacent righteousness. We live respectable lives. Before the law we are found blameless. In no small degree we love God with mind and heart and soul; and by choosing the neighborhood in which we live, we are able to love our neighbors—more or less.

But this very choosing of the neighborhood in

which we shall live, and the people to whom we shall be neighbors, has been fruitful of evil as well as of good. In an address on "Friendly Visiting," Mary E. Richmond—one of the directors of the Russell Sage Foundation—says, "Unconsciously, but very rapidly, we have been slipping away from a deeply varied social experience (the social life of the old-time New England towns) in which, rich and poor, landlord and tenant, employer and workman, tradesman and purchaser, dwelt together 'in visible relationship' into a stratified life in which our social relations are sadly impoverished." "We have been slipping away," she says, "from a deeply varied social experience," and that is precisely what the priest, and the Levite, and Dives, did. With what resnlt are we doing this? Says Miss Richmond: "The loss to the poor through (this) social stratification has been great, the loss to the country politically has been greater, and the loss to the relatively well-to-do has been greatest of all."

With what result are we doing this? Must we not answer—in the simile of the parable—we are allowing, as a matter of our own choosing, the opening up and the widening of a gulf of separation which is shutting us off—with all our increased ability and power to serve—from the lives of those who need our service.

The separating street is widening and deepening into an impassable gulf, so that they who would come over to us cannot come; and we who would go over to them cannot go, for they do not know us, and they have not learned to trust us.

Yet, as we are fond of pointing out to each other, everything looks trim and ship-shape on this side of the street, and the people are a fine-appearing, wholesome-living, law-abiding people. And we have a real regard for the deeper things of life, on this side of the street; we have a great many churches which are supported entirely by voluntary contributions, and the best traditions of the Christian Sabbath are observed by us. No one of us would really go out of his way, as the priest and the Levite did, to avoid serving someone in great need. Still, we must remember, that the man lying in the street in Jericho was *unable to move;* else, it is possible, he would have taken himself out of the way of the priest and Levite. And we must remember that Dives did not go out of his way to avoid Lazarus; it is doubtful if he so much as noticed him.

So we, I think, go upon our way without really seeing much of the world's need of us. We go on a beaten trail from home to office, or from neighbor's house to neighbor's house, or from home to church. We take long walks or drives into the country on every side, and we hear no cry for help. We see no great suffering which we could surely and permanently relieve. We feel no urgent demand for our untrained and unskilled services. On Sunday we go from our pleasantly situated homes to our church which we have built in a pleasant situation. Most of the people whom we meet on the way look prosperous and happy. We are able to take part in the church service with a conscience void of offense. And why

not? We are God-fearing people. We have done none of those things which righteous people ought not to do. We are not as some men are—extortioners, unjust, licentious, or even as certain others who are morally upright and yet contribute nothing to the support of the church. That is not enough. That is not all that is required of us. The voice of Jesus cries out to us from the other side of the street—from the unfamiliar way, and the paths where we do not walk.

The needs of those who live on the other side of the street are as obvious as they are numerous. There is need of decent housing and fresh air and sunlight and clean milk. There is need of instruction—not in the lore of text books but in the lore of life—in the feeding of infants, in the care of children, in nursing and cooking and sewing, in the elementary principles of hygiene and sanitation. There is need of wholesome recreation for the young people, and wholesome amusement for the older people. There is need of the friendship of cultivated people. There is need of everything which makes life so abundantly worth living on this side of the street.

The causes of these needs on the other side of the street are not wholly, or mainly, to be found on that side of the street. A hard-working, self-respecting, self-supporting family becomes dependent upon charity. The trained charity worker inquires into the cause and discovers that two of the children have died, and that the father has frequently been out of employment through his own ill health. There is no need to search for the cause of so much sickness—

the tenement which the family occupies is unfit for habitation. And this tenement is owned, on this side of the street,—where the houses are pleasantly situated, and where the best traditions of the Christian Sabbath are observed. And on this side of the street the disease-breeding tenement-house is considered a profitable investment.

A hundred babies die on the other side of the street, not of starvation, not as the result of bad housing, but as the result of improper feeding—and a hundred women on this side of the street, having the knowledge that would save the lives of those babies—or the leisure and the ability to acquire that knowledge—spend whole afternoons every week playing cards.

A hundred wage-earners, on the other side of the street, labor every working-day for a wage that provides only the barest necessities of the barest kind of living—and a hundred stock-holders on this side of the street receive an extra dividend out of the surplus profits of the year.

A hundred orphans, on the other side of the street, are put into an institution provided by the State, and live through the years of childhood and youth without knowing that affection of the home which no institution can supply—and on this side of the street there are a hundred homes in which the melody of a child's voice has never been heard, or has ceased to be heard.

There is no need on the other side of the street which cannot be supplied on this side of the street!

Is there need of enlightenment? We boast of our cultivation. Is there need of human sympathy? We read, in books of fiction, about the hardships of the poor, and our eyes quickly fill with tears. Is there need of a larger return to the wage-earners, of the profits of industry? That industry which does not produce a sufficient profit to pay the wage-earners a sufficient wage has no right to continue in existence. Is there need of sunlight and fresh air and clean milk and open places for the children to play in? The Heavenly Father has provided an abundant supply for all these needs; and of this supply we are not the owners, but the stewards, who, some day must render to Him an account of our stewardship.

Then shall the King say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger and ye took me not in, naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

The severity of the condemnation is not undeserved, for there is no need on the other side of the street which might not be supplied out of the overflowing abundance on this side of the street.

The objection is sure to be raised, that the gulf of separation between the fortunate and the unfortunate

is not as wide as it was two thousand years ago. With every advance in civilization, new bridges have been thrown across that ancient gulf. Our law courts and police system protect the lives of the poorest dwellers in our cities. Our hospitals receive, at public expense, the sick and disabled, who cannot care for themselves. The paupers and the insane are comfortably housed and clothed and fed. Our public schools, at public expense, furnish books and teachers for the poorest children. More and more the public schools are becoming the guardians of the health of the children. In all but the smallest cities, night schools extend the opportunity of education to those whose education was neglected in youth. In some of our larger cities the school houses in the poorer districts are being used as neighborhood houses—centers of instruction, not only in the lore of text books but also in the lore of life, in ways and means of moral and physical and social betterment. These public, and many private institutions are doing splendid work of the very sort that is commended in the parables of the good Samaritan and the Final Day of Judgment. And in so far as these institutions are our agents, through public tax or private contribution, we may justly say that we are ministering to the needs of the unfortunate, that we are, forsooth, Good Samaritans.

Regarding this, and similar arguments, it need only be said, that he is a poor neighbor indeed who recognizes no neighborly obligations beyond those which are met by his annual contributions to charity organizations and by the payment of his taxes. His very

contributions may be given, not from a charitable motive, but from the anti-charitable motive of seeking in this way to be rid of the obligations of personal neighborliness. He who makes such use of a charity organization makes of it one more barrier between himself and his needy neighbors. It is just this wholesale unloading of the obligations of individuals upon charity organizations, or upon society as a whole, which is the despair of every charity worker and of every faithful servant of humanity. All our material gifts to the poor, all our money contributions to charity organizations and to philanthropic institutions, are of little avail, unless, with the giving of our gifts, we give also of ourselves. We give something of ourselves when we acquaint ourselves with the work of the organizations to which we contribute, and with the needs of the people to whom they minister. And if someone complains that such an investigation of conditions of need, and of methods of relief, would take considerable time and thought, and so make of the very act of giving, a burden instead of a pleasure, the reply to his plaint must be: What right have you to assume that the giving of relief should be a pleasure, or that your share in the redeeming of the world should be blithely accomplished? Only by adding knowledge to sympathy, and both to our giving or our serving, can we meet the deepest needs on the other side of the street.

But on this side of the street, also, there are needs, as the Prophet of Nazareth knew full well. Indeed the very parables which we have been considering are

concerned with the needs on this side of the street rather than with those on the other side. It was not with the needs of Lazarus that Jesus was chiefly concerned, but with the needs of Dives, not with the needs of the man who fell among thieves, but with the needs of the priest and the Levite. He was chiefly concerned with these needs, because they were the gravest needs.

A similar condition exists to-day. The gravest needs are still to be found on this side of the street and not on the other side. For the gravest needs in our time are not the needs of the dwellers in unsanitary tenements, or of the underpaid wage-workers, or of the homeless children, but the needs of the owners of unsanitary tenements, the needs of the women who spend whole afternoons in playing cards, the needs of those who receive profits which they have not earned, and the needs of our childless homes.

As we reflect upon these needs, the truth suddenly confronts us, that all these needs on this side of the street can be supplied—on the other side of the street! In ministering to the deepest needs on the other side of the street, the deepest needs on this side of the street will be supplied—"for we are members one of another," and "whether one member suffereth all the members suffer with it, or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." On the one side, and on the other side, of the gulf of separation, alike, human lives are prevented from higher attainment and from nobler development by very reason of their separation from each other. On either side is

all that is needed on the other side to make life fuller and richer and deeper. The gulf of separation is a gulf of our own making—the gulf of our indifference to the welfare of our fellow-men and of our inactivity in the presence of their need. Such a gulf exists when landlords, and stock-holders, and employers, and contributors to charity organizations, and purchasers of goods, are indifferent to the welfare of tenants, wage-workers, laborers, the recipients of charity, and the makers of purchased goods. Such a gulf exists wherever there is absence of human sympathy between a man and those of his fellow-men with whose lives his life comes into contact. We live in a time that is marked by the eagerness of many to break through the barriers between themselves and their more prosperous neighbors; the time will come when most of us, with equal eagerness, will try to break through the barriers between ourselves and our less prosperous neighbors.

The measure of the gulf which separates us from our neighbor's need, is the measure of our own need—and the measure of our sin. The distance by which it separates us from our fellow-men, is the distance by which it separates us also from God. Whether our lives contribute to the widening or to the narrowing of that gulf of separation in this world, will determine whether we shall find our place on the right hand or on the left hand of the King in the world to come. That alone which can separate us from the fullness of life hereafter, is the choosing to separate ourselves from the fullness of life here.

The fullness of life here is to be found in the fulfilling of the two-fold relationship in which we stand related to God and our fellow-men. This relationship cannot be separated into two separate relationships, it is one two-fold relationship. We may worship God in solitude, but we must serve Him through society—through the relationships of family life, of friendship, of citizenship, and of daily occupation. In so far as we neglect the ethical and moral obligations of these varied relationships, we neglect Him who is present in every such obligation. In so far as we fulfill these obligations, we minister to the deepest needs of our fellow-men, and in so doing we minister also to Him.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? and when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.

(Hymn)

"When thy heart, with joy o'erflowing,
Sings a thankful prayer,
In thy joy, oh, let thy brother
With thee share.

"When the harvest-sheaves ingathered
Fill thy barns with store,
To thy God and to thy brother
Give the more.

"If thy soul, with power uplifted,
Yearn for glorious deed,—
Give thy strength to serve thy brother
In his need.

"Hast thou borne a secret sorrow
In thy lonely breast?
Take to thee thy sorrowing brother
For a guest.

"Share with him thy bread of blessing
Sorrow's burden share;
When thy heart enfolds a brother,
God is there."

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars, the principal to be securely invested and the income to be used to promote the work of the Association.

[No. 277]

THE CRYING NEED OF A RENEWED CHRISTIANITY

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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THE CRYING NEED OF A RENEWED CHRISTIANITY.

An address delivered under the auspices of the Unitarian Churches of Philadelphia, December 29, 1914.

This meeting is held under the auspices of three Christian Churches of a peculiar sort, belonging to a small denomination called Unitarian,— peculiar in that they have no ecclesiastical organization in the ordinary sense, and also no creed or body of dogmas which members of such churches must accept, or are supposed to accept. Every church in this peculiar body is independent, and, like the church of the Plymouth Pilgrims, chooses its own minister, enters, if possible, into such fellowship as it pleases with other churches, and decides for itself upon the charitable, educational, and social work it proposes to carry on. The denomination stands for complete religious liberty, for a respectful attitude towards all sincere religious beliefs — Christian or other — and for judging every religion by the amount of genuine twentieth-century ethics which finds place in it. This peculiar church invites serious and candid people to unite, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, for the worship of God and the service of Man, but leaves entirely to the individual the decision whether he shall join a church or not. No rite bars the way into this church, no baptism, confirmation, or examination, and no one

enters it in hope of reward or out of fear of punishment.

The great churches of Christendom all possess powerful ecclesiastical organizations, and bodies of doctrine which are supposed to contain already the whole of essential religious truth, and to be unchangeable from age to age, except as the ecclesiastical bodies which govern the respective churches choose to make additions, or to issue new interpretations. All the great Christian churches have instituted rites, rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, and observances which they require their members to accept, attend, or perform, particularly those relating to birth, marriage, and death, the great events in every human life. The creeds and dogmas of these churches contain many conceptions which are not arrived at or deduced by any reasoning process, but are mere products of the human imagination which are accepted by a mysterious intuition or insight with which neither inductive nor deductive reasoning has anything to do. The Unitarian Churches reject irrational piety, while maintaining to the full wonder, reverence, and awe.

The period at which this meeting takes place, is, in many respects, the most awful and momentous in the history of the world. More than 300,000,000 of people are involved in the most cruel and savage War that has ever been waged,— a War in which the recently-won powers of Man over Nature are all turned with an administrative efficiency greater than the world has ever before seen, to the most active and

persistent destruction of life and property, of the capital laid up by the industry and frugality of many previous generations, and of the good will which had begun to develop between nation and nation. The War has demonstrated that, while mankind discovered and is using the marvellous new powers of light, heat, and electricity for purposes of immense beneficence, governments called Christian are capable of using these same powers, acquired for beneficent ends, in a manner which spreads death, desolation, and sorrow among 300,000,000 of the human race, availing themselves for these horrible purposes of some of the finest moral qualities which inhere in the helpless multitudes. Moreover, during fifty years past, Christian nations in Europe have given their best efforts to devising and storing up the means of making war in the most destructive manner and on an unprecedented scale. The present holocaust has been planned deliberately with the utmost intelligence and foresight, and is being carried on with terrible efficiency by the nation which is chiefly responsible for it — a Christian nation like all the other nations involved except Turkey and Japan. This is the immense moral catastrophe of these times. It has taken place in spite of much progress made within a hundred years past in many parts of the world in popular education, humane literature, and public liberty, and of a widespread, sympathetic desire on the part of the more fortunate men and women to serve and help the less fortunate.

In nineteen hundred years the Christian institutions of religion, in other words, the highly-organized churches of Christendom, have not only been unable to accomplish anything effectual towards preventing the frequent occurrence of war, but have often incited to war each its own nation or its own race, and have made hotter the patriotic fires which blaze up in war-time. Every ruler concerned with the present War calls upon God to give victory to his arms; every one of them believes, as firmly as David or Joshua or Saladin did, that the Lord is on his side; and each people is putting up eager prayers to its national God which cannot be granted without denying the equally fervent prayers which go up from its adversaries, and is giving thanks for victories for its side which are cruel defeats for the other. Moreover, there come from the churches to-day no effective influences towards peace, but only delusive consolations and vague wishes and petitions, the granting of which by the God to whom they are addressed would only perpetuate the present horrible state of Europe. Who could imagine that the chief teachings of the founder of the religion which these nations and churches profess were — love God and thy neighbor, and treat all men as brothers. Clearly neither nations nor churches have ever been truly Christian.

It is a fitting time, therefore, in which to seek the reasons for the inefficiency of the great Christian churches in promoting the moral and physical welfare of mankind on this earth, whatever they may claim to

do in respect to human happiness in another. The first explanation is that institutional Christianity departed early from the teachings of the founder of the religion, and copied in its structure the authoritative and hierarchical arrangements, and in its doctrine the materialism of the Roman world. There emerged from the early centuries after Christ two despotic churches, each of which undertook to rule the minds and hearts of men, and did rule for many centuries the masses of the European peoples. The Protestant Reformation made a serious breach in the Roman Church, and brought in some new liberty — civil as well as religious — but Protestantism remained a highly authoritative religion; for within well-organized Protestant denominations the authority of the inspired Bible replaced for the common people the authority of the Roman hierarchy, the authoritative interpretation of the Bible being supplied by small groups of men learned in the theology of the times. Not till the Pilgrims set up in Plymouth their Free Church in their Free State, did the Christian world contain a fairly successful example of instituted civil and religious liberty. The Pilgrim Church and State set up standards of which America, at least, has never lost sight; but within seventy-five years many of the Pilgrims' liberties were lost or impaired; so that the compact signed in the cabin of the Mayflower, and John Robinson's doctrine that more light and truth were still to break forth from God's Word, became little more than a precious and fragrant memory.

The first explanation, then, of the impotency of the Christian churches as regards the prevention of war is that they were all organized with too much authority and too little liberty in them. They never believed in God's way of developing the best and most effective human character — the way of liberty to sin, in order to the development of self-control. The Christian ascetics avoided fleshly temptation by mortifying the flesh; the monks and nuns fled from the world altogether. The first duties of the common people in religion were obedience to the priest and the observance of the rites the priest prescribed. Men and women should be compelled to believe whatever the Church dictated, and should be held to the authorized beliefs and practices of the church by custom, tradition, and hallowed associations. The churches have not relied on the essential dignity of human nature and the human love of freedom for the uplifting of the race, but, on the contrary, on man's tendency to sin and his fear of the consequences, and on his too-frequent degradation in this world and his hope of salvation in another,— a salvation obtainable only through the vicegerents of God on earth. Not believing in liberty, the churches have habitually supported autocratic government, and that climax of autocracy—military discipline for purposes of conquest.

The second explanation of the impotency of the Christian churches to prevent war, or promote peace is to be found in the unethical quality of some of the doctrines of the Christian churches, as crystallized in their dogmas and creeds. The official creeds of the

great churches of Christianity, and many parts of the Scriptures contain conceptions of God's nature and of His action toward the human race which are intolerable to the ethical mind of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The creeds of the evangelical churches are, as a rule, built on the "fall of man" as described in the story of the Garden of Eden, the absolute correctness or trustworthiness of the story itself being assumed on the ground that its author was inspired by God himself. The conduct attributed to God in that story would be wholly unworthy of any man whose standards of conduct accorded with the average sentiments about right and wrong of civilized people to-day. God in that story is unjust, mean, and cruel; yet the story, taken as a narrative of facts, has been made the foundation of the official creeds of all the great Christian churches.

Man fell from a superior state of innocency into a condition of sin and misery. Nevertheless, he peopled the earth with creatures like himself, degraded and wretched. But this result was unsatisfactory even to barbarous ages, when considered as the work of God, and means of redemption and ultimate salvation had to be devised and formulated. Hence came the practice of propitiation or expiation by sacrifices — human sacrifices at first in Israel, but later burnt offerings of beasts and birds; and finally the Christian church discovered in the scriptures a vicarious atonement for the sins of the world by the Son of God, incarnated for a brief residence on this atom of an earth, in this insignificant solar system among the

countless myriads of celestrial bodies. The Lamb o
God was sacrificed for the sins of the world; and s
some small proportion of the human race was rescue
from eternal torment to justify by their eternal ha
piness, so far as they might, the original creation of
feeble race tricked into sin. The creeds of the grea
churches differ as to the proportion of the race reall
rescued by the vicarious atonement through Jesu
Christ; but they all agree in making this vicario
atonement necessary to the salvation of any proportio
of the human race.

In these days, the whole conception of one being—
human or divine — suffering, though innocent, fo
the sins of another, or of innumerable others, is re
volting to the universal sense of justice and fair dea
ing. No family, no school, and no court woul
venture to punish the innocent, when the guilty wer
known, in order that the guilty might escape punish
ment. Any human father would be outraged by th
suggestion that he had ever dealt, or could so dea
with his children; and yet every member of the grea
Christian churches is supposed to believe that Go
deals in that way with the human race; and that th
victim offered up for the redemption of a portion o
the human race was, in a peculiar sense, the son o
God. How incredible it is, that the religious institu
tions and doctrines, which resulted from the perve
sions of the real teachings of Jesus by the paga
world, should have been so completely and fundamen
tally inconsistent with the ethics of those teachings

Before the Christian churches can be expected t

be efficient in the promotion of human welfare, and particularly in the bringing of peace on earth, they must purge themselves of such doctrines as these. It is not enough to say in defense of the churches that many church members in good standing no longer believe these shocking doctrines; they should be eliminated from the published standards and confessions of the churches.

The historical Christian churches were early made partners with empires, monarchies, and baronies, in the control and oppression of the masses of mankind, and, the governments being maintained by force, the churches became, in general, supporters of the military régime. This was natural enough, because the God of the Christian churches, like Israel's God, was commonly thought of as Lord of Hosts, God of Battles, Successful Invader, and Glorious Conqueror. These martial attributes of God were described with glowing fervor in the litanies, ascriptions, and thanksgivings of the churches. Joshua's God was the most ruthless of destroyers. Not so destructive, however, as the German Emperor's God to-day; because he evidently lacked the power to destroy everything that he wished to destroy: "And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Some of the Canaanites successfully resisted the Lord of the Israelite hosts; but in these later days the Belgians could not successfully resist the Lord of the German hosts. This conception of God is hideous, cruel, and

insane; and no Christian church which tolerates it can be efficient in the promotion of human welfare and happiness.

Not only is the God of the great Christian churches often a War God, but the Christian life itself is often represented in Christian hymn and preachings as a battle. The Christian fights against Satan and the powers of evil,—he goes forth to war against the evils and wrongs of his day: "The Son of God goes forth to war, a kingly crown to gain"—meanest of motives. The saint wears armor, the armor of the mediaeval battle-field, and the archangels and the knights set upon the dragons and fiends, and slay them with swords. A large part of the imagery of Christian literature is drawn from the work of soldiers and armies. "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war" is to-day one of the favorite hymns of the Protestant churches. In the annual procession of the Corpus Christi in Vienna, three bodies take common part, each with great magnificence,—the court, the army, and the church. This is the habitual association which has gradually undermined the capacity of the Church to advance in modern Europe the cause of justice, mercy, and liberty, and hence of peace and good-will.

The Christian nations have, however, attained since the middle ages to a civilization which seems to modern men in Christian lands higher than that of the non-Christian nations, except in the prevalence of international war and fighting in general. For at least six hundred years the Christian nations have fought

oftener and harder than the so-called heathen. Within the past two centuries all the great wars have been fought on Christian soil by Christian soldiers. This recognized superiority in general civilization, however, is not chiefly due to the churches, but to other influences. The chief beneficial result of the Crusades was a remarkable development of Mediterranean commerce between the East and the West. The period which we call the Renaissance was the period of a remarkable revival of classical learning, and particularly of the Greek literature. The discovery of America brought about an immense increase of commercial adventure and of Occidental wealth; while the religious enthusiasm which accompanied the discovery was the source of hideous cruelties and barbarities. The Reformation was not a normal product of the Roman Church but a rebellion and schism within that church, one consequence of which was an increase of civil and religious liberty in Europe. In the eighteenth century began the great series of scientific discoveries due to the adoption and successful use of the inductive philosophy and method; and for the last one hundred and fifty years it has been natural and physical science which has been the main contributor to the increasing material welfare of mankind. Science has won its way in spite of the opposition of the principal Christian churches; and that opposition did not cease until within the memory of men now living; indeed, it still breaks out from time to time. And now, within the last five months, the worst War of all recorded time,—worst because of its wide extent, the fury with which

it is prosecuted, and the destructive power of its new implements, — brings unheard-of-misery upon the human race; and the Christian churches are helpless to prevent it, or even to mitigate its horrors. The effective organizations for such pitifully small relief as can be given are for the most part not religious but secular. The care of the wounded falls on men and women trained in natural and physical science, and possessing manual skill and the spirit of service. The effective works of mercy are performed not chiefly by representatives of the churches or by religious partisans and zealots, but by men and women who understand how to get food to the starving, to bring first-aid to the wounded and carry them quickly to hospitals, to prevent fevers and infections, to purify water supplies, and to treat lock-jaw, gangrene, and frostbite. The effective advocates of peace and good-will among men in this horrible convulsion, produced by a nation which believes in discipline, ruthless force and the domination of the strong over the weak, are not the priests and ministers of traditional Christianity or the performers of rites and ceremonies, but the teachers of public liberty as the indispensable source of the highest efficiency in individual or nation, and of public justice and righteousness developed under free governmental institutions which train men to self-control in freedom under law.

The great European War is fundamentally a conflict between freedom and democracy on the one side and the rule of hereditary monarchs and a military class on the other, that rule being maintained by

appeals to love of country and national pride, and enforced by a stern discipline which leaves nothing of liberty to the individual. In this strife the Christian Church as a whole is divided, each national church supporting its own nation; and by inheritance and tradition each national church supports the war-making power, no matter how cruel, deceitful, and faithless that power may prove to be. In short, the established and conventional churches manifest little power to promote either love to God or love to the neighbor.

Is this ineffective condition the final issue of the teachings of Jesus Christ, or is it only the result of the structure of the institutions, and the quality of the doctrines in which those teachings have been embodied and set forth? To this question a great many men in all the nations of Europe and America reply that such a discussion has no interest for them; that they have not only rejected the traditional dogmas of established Christianity, but that they have no interest in discussing them; that the vital movements of the human spirit have taken more promising directions; and that they are concerned not with the Christian churches, but with the new powers which make for liberty, enlightenment, and progress. Multitudes of these men say that they are ready for any sort of social service; and at this moment multitudes of them in France and England are showing by their voluntary acts that they are ready to suffer and die in the cause of freedom; while other multitudes, equal in number, permit themselves to be driven to wounds and death

in the cause of effective discipline, force, and domination. On both sides, millions of men are exhibiting extraordinary self-sacrifice and devotion, natural fruits of the spirit of Jesus Christ; but most of these heroes have not consciously derived these lofty sentiments from the Christian churches, but are moved by the common loves of family, home, and country.

For two generations the men that have been doing, and are now doing the work of the world have, in large measure, withdrawn from the organized churches, or maintain but a nominal connection with them,—a connection, however, which often includes considerable payments to the churches on behalf of their wives and children. Educated men as a rule, in both Europe and America, have ceased to be influenced in their opinions or their actions by the dogmas of the churches, by the rewards churches offer, or by the punishments they threaten. Sunday has become a day for physical rest, for outdoor refreshment, for attention to the family, or for the enjoyment of music, —sometimes at the church, but oftener at the club, the park, or the concert hall. With trifling exceptions, the church is no longer the centre of social recognition, or of social enjoyments for the multitude. The granges and trades-unions, the neighborhood houses, and the numerous beneficial societies provide in many communities the needed opportunities for social intercourse which church meetings used to provide. In former times the Christian churches were the almoners for the poor and desolate; and the chief works of mercy were carried on by men and

women especially commissioned by the Christian Church. Now, secular societies, administered by laymen, carry on many of the principal movements for the improvement of society,—such as the Civil Service Reform Leagues, the Playground Association, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, and the Associations for Baby, School, Social, and Mental Hygiene; and many of the hospitals, dispensaries, and asylums, whether supported by taxation or by the voluntary contributions of public-spirited persons, are the works of people whose motive-power is not derived from churches. To be sure, many churches have, of late, taken up some kinds of social work; but in such labors the churches are as a rule less effective than the lay societies. Even in its function of teaching children what religion is, what right conduct is, and what the motives are which lead to right conduct, the Church has much to learn. The Sunday School does not compare favorably in method or results with the week-day school, even as a teacher of elementary ethics; for it often lacks sound methods, adequate time, and the support of parents.

The fundamental trouble is that the Christian churches, as instituted and organized, have relied for centuries on imposed beliefs, rites, sacraments, symbols, and observances. Since the latter years of the eighteenth century, it has become more and more difficult to impose beliefs on educated people; and intelligent men have steadily lost faith in mysticism, symbolism, and sacerdotalism, and have come to rely more and more on the careful ascertainment of facts,

the human reason, and the natural sentiments of reverence and love. They have also come to prefer for themselves and their families liberty, independence, and public order founded on agreed-upon law, to obedience, submission, and order founded on discipline administered to the many by the few. With these new tendencies of the human spirit the great Christian churches are not in full accord.

The great Christian churches have always supported the claim of absolute monarchs that they rule by Divine right; but in the modern world only ignorant or archaic persons accept that doctrine. The mystic has always believed that in some unimaginable way he is the recipient, on occasion, of direct revelations from God through faculties or means of perception in himself which are instinctive rather than reasonable; but the advance in man's knowledge of nature, and in his power to apply to his own uses the natural forces, has made it harder than it used to be for an intelligent man to be a mystic. The thinking person who is enduring a life of suffering now, on this earth, is much less disposed than he used to be to accept as a real consolation another imagined life free from the struggles and pains of the present life. In other words, the consolations and hopes which the Christian churches have heretofore imparted to suffering human beings are to-day far less efficacious than they were in the first eighteen centuries. Neither the heaven nor the hell of the Christian churches appeals to the modern man as it formerly did to his predecessors.

The condition of Europe at this moment is the last and most convincing demonstration that the great churches of Christendom have lost their power to keep Man from sin, to guide him on an upward path, and to make him happy; for the churches are helpless in the presence of this terrible mass of long-planned, elaborately contrived human sin, shame, and suffering, although the mass is shot through by splendid gleams of courage, self-sacrifice, and patriotic devotion.

The religious state of Christendom to-day is therefore in need of a genuine revival. Mankind needs to worship, needs incitements to love, reverence, and duty, and a happy spiritual conception of the universe. Without these helps, Man cannot possibly be happy in his family, his labor, or his social order. Without these conceptions of the finite and the infinite values, Man cannot rise in his nature or his life from bad to good, and from good to better. No single personality born in Christendom—and no class of persons—can reach his best without accepting as his guides in life the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ,—love God and the neighbor, have compassion on the wronged and the desolate, seek the truth that frees, and worship God in spirit and in truth. To live in this way, it is not necessary to accept any of the dogmas of the great churches, or any part of their symbolism or ritualism. Indeed, much of their symbolism, ritualism, dogmatism and ecclesiasticism is inconsistent with essential obedience to the precepts of Jesus Christ.

What then is the renewed Christianity which these

terrible times we are living in cry out for in the midst of tears and heart-breaking sorrows? It is a Christianity which abandons the errors and the unjust, cruel conceptions which the centuries have piled up on the simple teachings of Jesus. It is a Christianity which sympathizes with and supports the aspirations of mankind for freedom,—freedom in thought, speech and action,—and completely abandons authoritative ecclesiasticism and governmental despotism It is a Christianity which hallows and consecrates birth, marriage, the bringing up of children, family life, the earning of the livelihood, and death, and rejects all the aspersions on the natural life of Man which Christianity inherited from paganism and Judaism. It is a Christianity which will be the friend and ally of all that is good and ennobling in literature-science, and art, and will avail itself without fear of all the new means of teaching and helping men which successive generations shall discover, and of all the innocent enjoyments and social pleasures, while resisting effectively every unwholesome or degrading influence on human society. It is a Christianity which will recognize that the pursuit of happiness in this world is legitimate for every human being, and that the main function of government is to protect and further men in that pursuit by securing to the community health, education, wholesome productive labor, and liberty.

Do you ask if there exist in the world any exemplars of this sort of Christianity? Fortunately for the future of the world, there are to be found in

nearly every Christian communion individuals who illustrate in their personal lives the purity and power of the simple religion taught by Jesus Christ. Many of these persons are quite unconscious of the embarrassments which the creeds, rituals, dogmas, and discipline of their respective churches would inflict on their candid minds, if they realized, or apprehended in clear and logical statements, the meaning of the traditional doctrines and rites of their churches. Finding themselves practically free to do justiy, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God, they remain in the churches into which they were born, held there by family ties, sweet associations, or conservative sentiment, and inattentive to the inconsistencies between their life of the spirit and the historical doctrines of the churches to which they belong. They are all exemplars of the renewed Christianity of which there is such crying need; and many of them are active promoters of that renewal.

The liberal churches of Protestantism are, however, the best exemplars of renewed Christianity; because they have definitely abandoned the official creeds and dogmas of the past, all ecclesiasticism, and almost all symbolism and ritualism. Their membership, modest in number and little disposed to proselytism, consists exclusively of persons who propose to be free, simple, and candid in their religious thought, and in all expressions of that thought. These independent churches lay the empnasis on character and conduct, and are concerned with the tendencies and practices

of their members in daily action, rather than with the beliefs of their fellowship.

After all, true Christianity is not a body of doctrines, or an official organization to direct and control men's minds and wills. It is a way of life.

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THE PARADOX OF PRAYER

BY

AUGUSTUS P. RECCORD

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

The American Unitarian Association was Founded in 1825 with the Following Expressed Purpose

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE PARADOX OF PRAYER

The most casual observer must be aware that there has been a decline in the habit of prayer. "Prayer," says Professor Youtz in his recent work, The Enlarging Conception of God, "has not kept pace with preaching." We have not inherited our father's facility in asking for changes of weather or of climate. We shrink from exposing the spiritual workings of our inmost souls as was the custom in the old-time prayer meeting. Furthermore, the restlessness and fever of our modern way of living tend to lessen the opportunity for a quiet hour in which to commune with the Father in spirit and in truth. We have not forgotten the questions precipitated by President Wilson's proclamation calling for a day of prayer for peace. "Of what avail," men asked, "is a day of prayer? What special efficacy can there be in even a nation wide petition? Can it, in any way, affect the ultimate issues of war or peace?" Such questions go right to the heart of the Christian religion. They are not to be evaded nor ignored. To deny the efficacy of such prayer is to deny the efficacy of all prayer, and to deny the efficacy of all prayer is to undermine one of the fundamental assumptions of the Christian faith and, indeed, of all religion. The spectacle of millions of Christian men and women raising their voices to God in the spirit of supplication and asking for a cessation of the

terrible slaughter which is devastating Europe and shocking the civilized world, all the while sublimely unconscious that such prayers are without effect, would be one of the most heartrending which any human mind could contemplate. Under such conditions we should be justified in saying, with St. Paul, "Then is our preaching vain; our faith also is vain."

If we grant, then, that the fact that prayer is common to all religions establishes, at least, a presumption in favor of its reality and efficacy, how are we to explain the growing uncertainty concerning it in the minds of Christian people? Among the many reasons which might be advanced there are three which are worthy of special consideration. One is the widespread confidence in the unchanging character of natural law. The days of the "mighty in prayer" were the days of superstition and credulity. Men had no conception of an orderly universe. Everything was the result of chance. God himself was a being of caprice, who could be diverted from his purpose by the cajolery or flattery or bribery or importunity of men. Under such conditions prayer was inevitable. It was the only way to secure the divine favor or avert the divine wrath. Today all this has changed. When science demonstrated that we live in a world of law and order, it made it difficult to believe in that sort of God. With the decline of faith in that sort of God there has been a shrinking from the habit of prayer. Why pray if the order of the universe is constant and unchanging? Why

agonize in spirit if we cannot hope that, for us, aught of good or ill will be set aside? Why wrestle with the Almighty if he is unable to alter the working of a single law which he has ordained? These questions and the convictions which give rise to them have sealed the lips of many a devout man or woman.

A second reason for the prevalent uncertainty concerning the efficacy of prayer is the growing acceptance of Jesus' representation of God as an infinitely wise and loving Father. The cruel and vindictive God of our fathers, having mercy upon whom he would have mercy and visiting the sins of guilty parents upon their guiltless children to the third and fourth generation, has been relegated to the theological scrap heap. Faith in the existence of such a monster would be sufficient justification for a popular uprising against all religion. God is nothing if not good, and in that goodness there can be no flaw. "He is not a man that he should repent of evil." The reason that he cannot repent of evil is that he cannot commit evil. All the world sympathizes with John Stuart Mill when he said that he would call no being good who is not good in accordance with the ordinary acceptance of that term and that if an Almighty God should see fit to send him to hell for refusing to call him good, then to hell he would go. Such an attitude commends itself to our self-respect but it does not add to our facility in prayer. It makes it savor of unfaith, of lack of confidence. If God is good, why pray to him to manifest his goodness? If he is a loving Father, why ask him to

do what every loving father is only too eager to do? Why not accept his blessings as they come, in a spirit of filial gratitude and love, without wearying him with our supplications and petitions? The seeming reasonableness of this self-contained attitude presents itself as an insurmountable obstacle to prayer.

The strongest obstacle, however, is the growing conviction that religion must be interpreted in terms of social service rather than of personal devotion. The call for action has led to the disparagement of the contemplative life. It has been discovered that many of the evils of the world, which we have vainly besought God to remove from us, can be eliminated by our own effort if we will but work intelligently and persistently. Centuries of prayer have not brought the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth, while a few years of consecrated effort have often transformed certain portions of our earth into a semblance of the Kingdom of Heaven. Again we ask, why pray for that which we can do ourselves? Or better, why ask God to do for us what we ought to be ashamed not to do for ourselves?

Thus we have what Professor Coe has called "the paradox of prayer." "Prayer," he says, "is one of the most characteristic acts of religion; yet religious progress has involved us in confusion and hesitation regarding it. Prayer is one of the facts of the life of Jesus; yet the increasing assimilation of his own teaching of the fatherhood of God takes the emphasis out of our own prayers." Prayer furnishes the in-

spiration to a life of service; yet the zeal for service has led to a decline in the habit of prayer. Such is the paradoxical situation to which the Christian world has been brought.

Under such conditions is it not perfectly evident that there has been something fundamentally wrong in our conception of prayer? We have thought of it primarily as petition, asking for something for ourselves or for others, in spite of the futility of asking for anything which is contrary to the will of God and the folly of asking for anything which his goodness has already ordained. To pray that God will divert some natural law from its appointed working in order that we may profit by this diversion is, to quote the trenchant words of Dr. Slicer, "to ask that the great through traffic of the world be shunted upon a siding while my little train has the right of way." Natural law is simply God's way of doing the world's work and, in the very nature of things, it must be constant and unchanging. Otherwise the world would be chaos and human life a species of insanity. We have heard much about the wonderful cures which have been wrought in response to prayer. Perhaps we have been to St. Anne de Beaupre and seen the accumulation of crutches and canes and similar appliances which testify to the healing power of that famous shrine. That which impressed me, however, was not the heap of discarded appliances at the door nor the autograph testimonials upon the walls but the constant procession of afflicted human beings who came to the shrine, waited in an agony

of prayer for the performance of the miracle, and then went away conscious that no miracle had been wrought. The few cases of healing wrought by subjective conditions induced by a visit to the shrine cannot atone for the multitude of cases in which men and women have made the pilgrimage in eager anticipation and gone away plunged into the depths of disappointment and despair. Such pilgrimages are not an evidence of faith but of credulity. They do not testify to a sense of dependence upon God but to a reliance upon the supernatural. They are based upon the delusion that prayer is a means of inducing God to do what he would not do otherwise.

Now let us suppose that we accustom ourselves to think of prayer, not as supplication but as cooperation; not as asking God to work for us but as pledging ourselves to work with God. The moment we transfer the emphasis from petition and supplication to communion and consecration, all difficulties are cleared away. Prayer is no longer an emotional indulgence or a mystical revery; it is an act of faith, an expression of confidence in the goodness and power and love of God, a dedication of all our powers and faculties to the doing of his will. Such prayer may be defined as the response of the human soul to its spiritual environment. It is an attempt to come into conscious relationship with a power higher and holier than itself. Sooner or later we all become conscious of great spiritual forces which surround us on every hand and hold us continually in their embrace. We flatter ourselves that we are free; we sing, with en-

thusiasm, "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul," but in the last analysis we are all alike creatures of destiny. In spite of our apparent freedom and self-direction, we know that within us and around us there is a power over which we have no control and which is constantly influencing our lives for good or ill. "It is he that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture."

From time immemorial men have sought to come into touch with this power. They have tried to establish conscious relationship with their spiritual environment. Sometimes this attempt has taken the form of spoken petition and adoration, and in this way have grown up the prayers of the ages. At other times it has resorted to a sort of sign language, seeking to express itself in postures and rituals and elaborate ceremonies. Occasionally it has ignored both of these methods and contented itself with silent communion and unspoken aspiration. In each case, however, it has been prayer; and wherever it has proceeded from a sincere motive, an earnest and honest desire to bring the human soul into touch with the great Over-soul, it has been true prayer.

Such prayer can never lose its efficacy. It does not involve any violation of the orderly processes of nature. Neither does its efficacy depend upon the mediation of churches or priests. It may lead to the building of temples and the construction of liturgies, but these are simply a means of giving expression to the prayerful mood. In that prayerful mood we do

not ask that aught of good or ill be set aside for our advantage, but that we may use whatever God, in his infinite goodness, may send for our good. Furthermore, such prayer does not seek to compel any change in the nature and purposes of God. The change is in ourselves. It serves to break down the barriers and remove the obstacles which have so long hindered the accomplishment of the divine will. It cannot be dismissed as an attempt to bolster up a declining faith in God and in the reality of the spiritual world. On the contrary, it takes that spiritual world for granted and affirms that there can be uninterrupted commerce between our finite human souls and the great Over-soul. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him." Neither is it an attempt to acquaint God with our individual wants and desires. It does not summon us to catalogue our necessities, nor to chronicle our aspirations. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Least of all is it an attempt to substitute pious contemplation for active service. Even the righteous are not heard because of their much speaking. In the words of a Jewish proverb, "The prayers of the righteous are short." The essential feature of true prayer is not the words and phrases in which it finds expression,—these may be rhetorically perfect or halting in the extreme. It is "the movement of the soul in its effort to put itself into contact with the Eternal Spirit." Such contact always imparts the impulse to work. Not those who

say "Lord, Lord," but those who do the Father's will shall enter the kingdom.

This interpretation of the nature and function of prayer is in accord with the teachings of men whom we all revere. "Prayer," says Dr. Peabody, "is the language of the soul." "It is religion in action," says Sabatier. It is, according to F. W. H. Myers, "a general name for the attitude of open and earnest expectancy," without which no great thing can be accomplished. As for its efficacy, we have the testimonies of James Martineau and Sir Oliver Lodge. Says the theologian, "It is no outward change, no shifting in time or place, but only the loving meditation of the pure in heart that can reawaken the Eternal from the sleep within our souls; that can render him a reality again: and reassert for him his ancient name of The Living God." In almost the same strain the scientist affirms that "The highest type of prayer has for its object, not any material benefit, beyond those necessary for our activity and usefulness, but the enlightenment and amendment of our wills, the elevation of all humanity and the coming of the Kingdom." Such prayer is practically synonymous with the Christian life. It is a concrete expression, in a fitting place and under favorable conditions, of the spirit and purpose which should dominate our daily living. It not only serves to pitch the life of each new day at its proper level, but it affords an opportunity for simple, unostentatious, yet helpful religious expression, and cannot but minister to moral and spiritual development. To be helpful, it must be habitual. To derive

the greatest benefit from public prayer, one must accustom himself to private prayer. It may be the repetition of some familiar petition around the family altar, or it may be a quiet talk with God in the seclusion of our own closet, but in either case it serves to reenforce the conviction that we are not pilgrims and strangers but children of the household of God.

But what of the answer to prayer? In view of our considerations, thus far, such a question loses its relevancy. When we remember that the primary object of prayer is not petition but communion, we no longer concern ourselves about the answer. To attempt to dictate what blessings God shall bestow upon us is impiety. To pray that the laws of the universe be set aside in order to further our particular plans is impertinence. To ask for the things that we ought to ask for rather than for the things we really desire and for which we are striving with heart and soul and mind and strength is hypocrisy. To ask for specific blessings and then refrain from all personal effort is mockery. Such prayers are never answered. But when we make our prayer the vehicle for expressing our highest aspirations and desires and then add to our prayer consecrated effort, it cannot be without result. The answer may not be the one for which we had looked. Prayers are often answered in a larger and fuller sense than we had dreamed. Moses prayed that he might enter the land of promise; instead he was given the power to relinquish his work into another's hands, confident that in the end God's

purposes would be fulfilled. Jesus prayed that the cup might pass from him. Instead he was given the strength to drink it to the dregs and say "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Such prayer can never pass away. In its simplest and lowest form it will always remain petition, asking for the things that we most desire but knowing all the while that God will grant us only such blessings as are most expedient for us. In another and higher form it becomes aspiration and meditation, a yearning for the higher life and a desire that we may be given the strength to live it. But in its highest form it becomes communion, the blending of the human and the divine, involving the complete identification of our wills with the will of God and bringing with it the consciousness that we are standing in God's presence and that our souls have been attuned, for the moment at least, to the infinite. Then prayer becomes its own answer and its own sufficient reward. It is this experience which Tennyson had in mind when he wrote,—

> "More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of; wherefore let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
> For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands in prayer?"

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of Its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; price, $1.50 *net;* **postage, 18 cents additional.**

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The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post Office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

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The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals.

There are two forms of membership in this Association provided for those who desire to cooperate in the spread of liberal religious thought and influence:

I. *Life Membership.* Any individual may, by the payment of $50, become a *Life Member* of the American Unitarian Association. Such a person is entitled to vote at all business meetings, to receive the Year Book and Annual Report, and, by means of frequent communications, is kept in touch with the various enterprises promoted by the Association.

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25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

[No. 279]

WHY "THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS"?

BY
ABRAHAM M. RIHBANY

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

The American Unitarian Association was Founded in 1825 with the Following Expressed Purpose

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Why "The Leadership of Jesus"?

"In every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, will rejoice."—PHIL. i. 18.

It is not unfrequently asked by both liberal and orthodox churchmen, why we, Unitarians, who believe in the universality of religious truth and in the validity of the claims of all the great prophets of religion, should seek to attach ourselves in a peculiar manner to Jesus Christ, and to proclaim him our spiritual leader. Again it is asked, why do we, who believe in a natural, continuous and progressive revelation of religion, and who differ so widely from the historic creeds, wish to be called Christians?

Not a few among us say "'What's in a name?' So long as I know what I stand for, call me what you please." I notice, however, that this unusually liberal attitude of mind is cheerfully maintained until those who assume it are misnamed and their real position is erroneously described; then they protest against such misrepresentation as vigorously as would those who do believe that there is something in a name.

If your name is William, you may forgive being called John or Matthew, a few times; beyond that your situation becomes rather unpleasant. In a similar manner if you are an individualist, to be called "socialist" will not be agreeable to you; and if you are

a Christian by preference and sentiment, you would not enjoy being called a Mohammedan, or a Buddhist, however friendly you might feel toward those religions. The fact is, what you "stand for" is of real worth to you as a social being only when it is understood by those who know you, and they (at least for convenience) must know you by some name. Inasmuch then as a name means identity of person and attitude, it is of great worth. And so long as we value what we stand for, we must "care" what we are called.

Yes, as Unitarians we do believe in the universality of religious truth, in the sense that "never was to chosen race that unstinted tide confined." But at the same time we believe that universal truth, as such, is of no practical worth and has no direct appeal. Truth is power, healing, and health only as it comes through human souls; otherwise it is no more than a mental abstraction. The purest and most persuasive revelations of truth in the possession of man have come through the greatest and purest souls.

Now, whatever other religious leaders have done or failed to do, to us spiritual truth has come, at least chiefly, through Jesus Christ. His message is our chief spiritual treasure, and that message is inseparable from the person who first proclaimed it. To us, in a real and not a dogmatic sense, "the truth is in Jesus." That his gospel has not come down to us in its virgin purity, that his person has been fancifully idealized, are facts of which we are

keenly mindful. Nevertheless, in all this we perceive the eagerness of the generations that have gone before us to keep the Master's personality central in their minds and hearts, and to know the Gospel not as a speculative treatise on religion, but as "the Word made flesh," and the truth in the form of a living personality.

But why, in any case, should we desire to follow a leader in an age and a communion which have such strong passion for democracy? Do we not proclaim the perfect freedom and the sovereignty of the individual? Do we not preach religion as individual first-hand contact with God? If so, why then do we crave a leader?

Yes, we are profound believers in democracy and the free study and practice of religion. But, truly understood, democracy of all social orders is preeminently the mother of leaders. That free social order which does not know and appreciate the value of competent leadership is not democracy, but anarchy. Again, the difference between democracy and autocracy, or between a fraternal and an ecclesiastical church, is that in the former the leader is a servant, while in the latter the leader is a tyrant. Democracy believes in the contagion of character and the leaven of beneficent leadership. Its leaders are its life centres, and the greater and truer the leader, the fuller the life of the society he serves.

In our democratic communion we own Jesus as our leader because he was the world's first democrat. His declaration was that he came "not to be minis-

tered unto, but to minister" and to give his life for others. We would follow him not as slaves driven to obedience by the lash of authority, not as believers in the infallibility of his reported sayings or the church which bears his name, but as his free and loving disciples who would learn from him the secret of disinterested service and unselfish love. We have other leaders within the Christian fold whom we love and honor, but they also point to him as their inspiring guide and enlightening teacher.

And let me say here that the matter of leadership and discipleship transcends all theories. The lesser is bound to look up to the greater, and smaller souls to gravitate toward greater souls. "He who has more soul than I conquers me." Those who refuse the leadership of Jesus, as a rule, follow some other leader. Many of the so-called "infidels"—whatever this term may mean — would follow Ingersoll or Spencer or Huxley; they would be led by some soul mightier than they.

For a similar reason we would be called Christians. Christianity is our home and native land. The word "Christianity" has a richer meaning for us than the general term "religion," just as the word "America" has a sweeter meaning to a true American than the expression "the habitable world" has. Nor do we feel like abandoning the designation "Christian" to that mass of superstitious and ecclesiastical creeds and dogmas of which Jesus knew nothing, and which are foreign to the spirit of the New Testament. To us Christianity is not what has been cast in such

philosophical moulds, but the light and leading of divine-human love, which is never too high for the lowly, nor too low for the wise and learned.

Christianity, therefore, *is* that progressive, continuous revelation which is limited to the mentality of no one age, and is in the exclusive keeping of no one sect or creed.

But why do we call Jesus Leader rather than Saviour, the title given him by the majority of Christians? The term "saviour" as applied to Jesus is still used by some among us in an ethical rather than a dogmatic sense. Few of us, I believe, would object to this designation if it was understood to mean that, by his example and teaching, Jesus saves those who faithfully follow him from the thoughts and deeds which tend to corrupt and degrade, and leads them to the things that heal and build and ennoble the soul.

But, unfortunately, the word "saviour" has been understood to mean that Jesus saves those who believe in the dogmas of his deity, miraculous birth, and vicarious atonement from damnation hereafter, and that those who "believe not shall be damned." Now, in order to avoid this cruel doctrine we prefer to call Jesus "leader" or "teacher," rather than "saviour."

Needless to say that I respect all those who do sincerely and honestly hold such a view of "salvation," so called, and I have no doubt that by it many are encouraged to face the vast unknown with confidence that the great "Advocate" is there to save

them from its hidden terrors. And, like Paul, I rejoice in the preaching of Christ in whatever form. The orthodox Christian preaches Christ, the liberal Christian preaches Christ. The Socialist, the Communist, the Theosophist and others preach Christ, each of them from a different viewpoint. In so far as Christ is preached by all of these as a spiritual or a social ideal, he is a help to all.

But, as for me, I must confess that I do not know what all that is said about "salvation" in a dogmatic sense means. If I ever feared the vast unknown, I do not remember it. And it seems to me that for a Christian to proclaim that God fills all time and space, and then to fear the hereafter, is a species of disloyalty. For a Christian to proclaim that God is love, that He loves us more than we can love our children, and then to suspect that He has set a trap for us somewhere in His universe into which we should surely fall without a saviour is, to say the least, a huge contradiction.

My thought of the hereafter is that of confidence and trust that He who has brought me here and wrought a thousand miracles in my body and soul will take care of the work of His hands hereafter. I ask for no advocate to save me from whatever my heavenly Father has for me. If Jesus and the other saints and seers of earth live hereafter as personalities, as I believe they do, they will surely be my friends and helpers in those higher spheres, as they were the friends and helpers of men while on this earth.

The vast unknown can have no terror for a true Unitarian Christian, because it is the many-mansioned house of our divine Father.

Amid the many changes and chances of my life, and in my frequent associations with pain and sorrow as a Christian minister, this thought has never deserted me. I have never stood by an open grave without this faith as my sustaining friend. On all such occasions, although I always share far more than I dare express the tender sorrow of those who weep around me, my controlling thought always is that He who spreads the beneficent heavens over us and gives us life and love has in His parental keeping the soul which has just vanished from our midst. And as I say, "Earth to earth, dust to dust," I say also, "Life to life, spirit to spirit!"

It is often said that Unitarian Christianity is a religion good enough to live by, but not to die by. I can not see how a religion that is good to live by is not good to die by. A religion that is good to live by must be true, good, and beautiful. It must lead to personal purity, spiritual aspiration, and deeds of sacrificing love, all of which graces are certainly not lacking in the lives of true Unitarians. Now, why should any one believe that what is true, good, and beautiful here is very likely to prove false, bad, and ugly hereafter? Is God such a deceiver that the truths and virtues which He gives us to live by in this world are destined to deceive us in the world to come? Is it possible that the divine graces which feed and beautify the soul in this earthly life will

prove counterfeit as soon as we step over the threshold of another room in our Father's house?

No! We have too strong a faith in the sanity of the universe and the goodness of God to harbor such suspicions. The best testimony to the truth and goodness of our faith is that it does away with the fear of death. It is a constant assurance that what is truth here will be a greater truth hereafter; that love here will be purer love in the great beyond, and the life to come will be the fulfilment of the present life.

This is what the Christian faith and the leadership of Jesus mean to us. Trust in God and complete reliance upon His laws, courage in the face of danger, sacrificing love, and, in the hour of death, faith and hope that "this mortal shall put on immortality."

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[No. 280]

THE RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

BY

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, LL.D.

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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THE RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS OF AN AMERICAN CITIZEN*

It has been my lot to be the chief executive for four years of an Oriental people more than seven millions in number—Christians, Mohammedans, and Pagans. I have been chief executive of the American people for a similar period and have had other experiences in the government of these two very different peoples. The longer and more intimate my knowledge of their political and social lives, the more deeply impressed I have become with the critical importance of the part that the Church and religion must play in making popular government what it ought to be, and in vindicating it as the best kind of a government that an intelligent people can establish.

The necessity for the infusion of the religious spirit into the prevailing morality for the purpose of giving it life and persistent influence is a fact that every one who studies the life of a people from the standpoint of a responsible administrator of government must recognize. There are doubtless many individuals who live a moral and upright life, who are not conscious of religious faith or feeling or fervor; but however this may be in exceptional cases, it is the influence of religion and its vivifying

*An address delivered as President of the General Conference of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Churches.

quality that keeps the ideals of people high, that consoles them in their suffering and sorrow, and brings their practices more nearly into conformity with their ideals. The study of man's relation to his Creator and his responsibility for his life to God energizes his moral inclinations, strengthens his self-sacrifice and restraint, prompts his sense of paternal obligation to his fellow-man, and makes him the good citizen without whom popular government would be a failure.

If it be said that this view of the need of religion and its value is not as high as it should be because it looks chiefly to progress in human welfare and happiness in this world rather than in the next, I can only say that the character and needs of this world we know, while we can but surmise the features of the next. Milton's words, which he put into the mouth of his real hero, Satan, "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven," we can verify by this world's experiences. We may rest reasonably satisfied that the religious spirit and conduct which help to create heavenly human happiness in this life will not be out of keeping with life hereafter.

The tendency of the Christian world toward greater liberality in creed is interesting to trace. In the sixteenth century few believed in religious tolerance, one faith and creed was right, all others were wrong, and it was the duty of the orthodox to force their creed on all for the glory of God and for the saving of the unbelievers. It was better to use compulsion

with him, even to his death, to induce conversion, because if obdurate in his unbelief he was bound for eternal torment anyhow.

Erasmus, in the sixteenth century, was a noteworthy exception. He believed in religious toleration and resented the restrictions upon him, a priest of the Church, which a different rule entailed. The Papists and the Puritans conceded the logic of each other by the same intolerance; and the Puritans of New England, who sought her rocky shores in search of freedom to worship God in their way, denied it to others and banished Roger Williams to his Providence colony, which became a refuge for all schismatics.

Various influences prevailing when our National Government was formed secured complete religious freedom and tolerance. The logic of the doctrine of individual responsibility to God taught by the Puritans ultimately led in New England to independence of religious thought and toleration of differences in creed. The Friends, under Penn, had always upheld it. The Catholics of Maryland, with a charter from an Anglican throne, favored it. Jefferson was a Unitarian, and fought the fight of religious freedom in Virginia. Some of the States retained tests of eligibility to the electorate and to office, based on religious creed, but these soon disappeared.

The first Amendment to the Federal Constitution declaring for freedom of religion and against any establishment of a state church, although at first only a restraint upon the Federal Government, soon represented the attitude of all the States on the same subject.

Under complete freedom of religion, liberal thought is bound to assert itself. The intensity of persecution does not then destroy a sense of proportion as to the essentials of a faith and its incidents. Channing's sermons and the schism in the very home of orthodoxy followed. While the law as to freedom of religion was sweeping, the attitude of the orthodox churches and of society, which they dominated, was still intolerant and severely condemnatory. Gradually, however, the views of many in the evangelical churches have grown more liberal, and in the generation through which I have lived, I can see a marked change of attitude toward Unitarianism and liberal religion.

My father and mother were Unitarians; my mother's mother was a Unitarian who followed Channing. Liberal religion was therefore bred in my bones. After a life of nearly threescore and of a not inconsiderable contact with many religions, I do not find my views changed as to the profound importance both of maintaining the Christian religion as an indispensable element in the progress of civilization to better and higher ideals and of the persistent upholding of liberality in Christian religious thought as a means of stimulating and elevating the lives of those whose faith in a strictly orthodox creed has failed and who, but for a broader religious outlook, might drift into indifference and lose the inspiration of religion that all men need.

Now, what are Unitarians? Are they Christians?

Of course, that is a matter of definition. If a man can be a Christian only when he believes in the literal truth of the creed as it is recited in the orthodox evangelical churches, then we Unitarians are not Christians. A Unitarian believes that Jesus Christ founded a new religion and a new religious philosophy on the love of God for man, and of men for one another, and for God, and taught it by his life and practice, with such Heaven-given sincerity, sweetness, simplicity, and all-compelling force that it lived after him in the souls of men, and became the basis for a civilization struggling toward the highest ideals. Unitarians, however, do not find the evidence of the truth of many traditions which have attached themselves to the life and history of Jesus to be strong enough to overcome the presumption against supernatural intervention in the order of nature. They feel the life of Jesus as a man to be more helpful to them, as a religious inspiration, than if he is to be regarded as God in human form. They find in the higher criticism of the Gospels reason enough to explain those passages in which the supernatural is set forth as part of Jesus' life and doctrine, as additions to a much simpler story upon which the synoptic gospels were founded. They learn that the composer of each gospel had a bent and a motive which colored his rendition of an earlier story, and that the prompting to do so was found in early controversies in the Church between Jews and Gentiles. They realize that the grandness of style and the doctrinal character of the Fourth Gospel

were well suited and were necessary to the strengthening of the Christian Church, as it then was, among the people of the civilized world. But they deny that they lose the essence of Christianity when they give up miracles, the Virgin birth, and the deity of Jesus. The Unitarians have always emphasized the life of Jesus in his teaching of love as the foundation of all things spiritual, and the motive and end of the Kingdom of God. In that sense, and that we believe to be the true sense, Unitarians are Christians.

The views which Unitarians have avowedly adopted as their faith have forced themselves, in one form or another, into the minds of many laymen and some clergymen of orthodox churches. They have softened the rigidity of a narrow insistence on literal acceptance of every dogma. They have liberalized the attitude of many of the evangelical churches. Many orthodox clergymen have done away largely with the doctrinal sermon and with attacks upon differing creeds. Instead they exalt, as they should, the profoundly helpful example of Jesus' life and his pregnant parables and lessons of love and true happiness in seeking the Kingdom of God. They dwell upon the purpose of all his actions, embodied in the sentence: "And Jesus went about doing good."

Not only that, but they are making their churches centres of doing good. They are showing the essence of Christianity by their works of helpfulness. Many modern churches have become institutional in the organization of branches for philanthropic, charitable and educational progress among those for whom they

feel responsible. While I do not say that this change indicates a general surrender by church authorities of the tenets of the orthodox Christian creed, it indicates a change of emphasis that enables many laymen to remain within the church whose minds tend toward a more liberal Christianity. This change has, I believe, strengthened the churches in their useful and elevating influence upon society, and it has brought all churches closer together in a common advance. There is more team work among them.

This tendency has modified the attitude of orthodox churches toward Unitarians in a large degree. It has promoted a spirit of tolerance and friendly co-operation. It was not always so. Jefferson, though a sincere student of the teachings of Jesus and a Unitarian, was denounced as an atheist. We know the contumely, insult, and mob violence to which Priestley was subjected in England. Franklin, the Adamses, and Fillmore were really Unitarians, but they were looked at askance. Lincoln, one of the most deeply religious men, was clearly Unitarian in his faith. In spite of all these illustrious examples, religious prejudices have been played upon in politics to defeat Unitarians and upholders of liberal Christianity and in very recent years; but even in the time my life compasses, I can see a great change for the better.

When the intolerance was great, when the real feeling of the orthodox clergy and laity was, in its spirit, out of harmony with the constitutional declaration in favor of freedom of religion, it was necessary

for Unitarians to be militant, and to deal blow for blow in controversy, and to give reasons for the faith that was in them. But now that the struggle for liberal Christianity has so largely prevailed, now that it is showing itself in the orthodox churches themselves, and in their laity, we can be content to maintain our Unitarian congregations and fold, still comparatively small in number, knowing that, consciously or unconsciously, our attitude and the scientific spirit of modern days in Biblical criticism have revealed, in its proper lines, the real essence of Christianity, and have blurred doctrinal and denominational distinctions in a union of effort to follow the teachings and religion of the life of Jesus Christ. The office performed by Unitarianism in this respect has been one of the highest importance in retaining for many men and women of strong intellect, independence, and courage of thought, the consolations and strengthening inspiration of religious faith and their responsibility to God, without the necessity of professing beliefs which to them are unproven and unprovable. A people without religion are lacking in the greatest aid to the progress of society through the moral elevation of individuals and the community. A church and a faith which reconciles religion and freedom of thought and retains the essence of a Christianity and which has done so much to redeem the world and advance it in real happiness toward the Kingdom of God, has a right to claim a reason for being.

It is not for us to attack the faith of other Chris-

tians. It is not for us to rouse in them the doubts that have troubled us in accepting their creed. It is not for us to deny the good their faith does them or the comfort their religion gives them. It is for us to encourage all churches where they are working, as they all are working, for the good of man, and where we can unite with them or express our general sympathy with them to do so.

The Young Men's Christian Association I consider one of the greatest practical agencies for saving young men from dissipation and degradation and for stimulating them to useful and moral lives. In those to whom it offers its encouraging facilities it makes no distinction of creed or religion. It is non-denominational except that by one of the rules of its original organization, its directors must be members of an orthodox Protestant evangelical church. This has been made the basis for severe criticism of its narrowness. I cannot share this view. The rule of eligibility to the directorate was adopted in an earlier period and perhaps would not be insisted on were it being organized today. The whole administration, however, is now so catholic and liberal and so world-wide in its usefulness that this feature does not trouble me. When I think that, in China, mandarins, who are Confucianists or nothing, contribute generously to Young Men's Christian Association establishments because of the good it does in the large cities of the far Orient, I don't think it is for a Unitarian to withhold his aid and encouragement merely because he is not eligible to its directing lead-

ership. My life has fallen in places in which the importance of the spread of civilization by foreign Christian missions has deeply impressed itself on me. My advocacy of all Christian foreign missions is not based, I hope, on a narrow view of other than the Christian religions. The earlier spirit of our Christian missions was narrow and tended to defeat itself in its bitter contempt for, and opposition to, other religions. The wider, more catholic, and, I think I may say, the more Christian spirit which actuates them now recognizes the good there is in the great religions like the Mohammedan and Buddhist faiths in keeping before the minds of their followers the capital importance of their relation to God.

The great advance which the Christian religion promotes with them is in enlarging their religious conception to appreciate the ever loving fatherhood and close companionship of God, the importance in His eye of the individual, and the mitigation of the sternness and aloofness of the God of their religions. The Christian missions have performed a great office with pagan peoples. By their good works in establishing hospitals and furnishing medical aid, in founding schools, and in the sacrifices that the missionaries and their families make to help the people with whom they live, they offer incontestable evidence of the spirit of the Christian religion, whose ministers they are.

They have not converted to Christianity from other religions as many as one might wish, from a statistician's point of view, considering the expenditure of

life, money and effort in the work: but they have founded centres of influence and power among millions of pagan peoples from which each year and each decade are spreading the idea that government is for the welfare of the people and that Christianity and Democracy are closely associated. The political changes taking place in China, India and Africa are much affected by the Christian missions, whose heads are consulted by the leaders and rulers of the peoples who recognize the position the missionaries have attained in the respect and confidence of those among whom they have gone about doing good.

It was a great pleasure to enjoy membership in All Souls' Church in Washington during my incumbency as chief magistrate and to contribute some effort toward the construction of a great National Unitarian Church edifice at the Country's Capital. Many of the statesmen of the country in the past have been members of that church.

I have come to the close of my remarks. The creeds and dogmas that attached themselves to the religion of Jesus, needed perhaps in securing its spread among the nations and its triumphal march to a better civilization, have encountered the searching freedom of scientific intellectual inquiry, and have shaken in the minds of many, not the essential principles of the Christian faith as we Unitarians believe them to be, but the incidental tenets of a rigid theology. In order that the craving for religion and a study of man's relation to God should still act as an inspiration to human self-elevation and moral pro-

gress, Unitarianism offers a broad Christian religious faith that can be reconciled with scientific freedom of thought and inquiry into the truth, and rescues from religious atrophy and indifference an element of society that must be influential. Indirectly, too, it has liberalized the requirements of other churches so that they retain in their laity and under elevating religious influence an important part of the community that otherwise might drift away. These are the good things that Unitarianism has done and is continuing to do.

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25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

[No. 281]

THE MISSION OF UNITARIANISM

BY

MARION FRANKLIN HAM

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THE MISSION OF UNITARIANISM

What is the mission of Unitarianism? The question is both an inquiry and a challenge. It asks us for information regarding our form of faith, and at the same time calls upon us to give the reason for our existence as a group of churches. Why do we separate ourselves from the older Christian organizations and form a new fellowship of churches? What do our Unitarian churches stand for? What are they trying to do? In plain words, what is their reason for being? All this is implied in the original question.

It may be well for us to begin our answer by saying that Unitarianism has a definite and very important mission. In order to fulfill this mission Unitarians have felt that they must be free from certain forms of authority which still remain in force in other denominations. For instance, the written creed is still a bar to freedom and progress of thought in the older Christian fellowships. People who remain in those fellowships are required to give at least outward assent to certain fixed statements of belief which tend to prevent mental and spiritual growth. In many of the Christian denominations the form of church government is such as seriously to interfere with the liberty of individual churches and of the people composing them. In order, therefore, the

better to equip ourselves for the accomplishment of our mission, we Unitarians have formed a new religious fellowship of free churches, as we call them; by which we mean churches free from the doctrinal and ecclesiastical restrictions common to other Christian organizations.

And what is the mission which our Unitarian churches have undertaken to fulfill? In a general way we may say that the mission of Unitarianism is to bring about the reformation of Christianity by simplifying and purifying it; but in order to make this statement intelligible it will be necessary to observe certain facts pertaining to the development of religions in general, and of Christianity in particular.

Religions, like everything else in the world, tend to develop from the simple to the complex. Nearly all the great systems of religion had their origin in the simple teachings of one man. Confucianism, Parseeism, Judaism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, respectively, are the outgrowths of the teachings of Confucius, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, and Jesus. But all these religions, as they stand today, are essentially different from the comparatively simple teachings of their founders. They have been so modified and corrupted, in the course of time, by innumerable accretions of foreign matter, that they now bear small resemblance to that from which they were derived. In each case the founders of these religions were men of clear vision and vigorous expression. They saw truth distinctly and in correct proportions, and told the world in

simple terms what they saw. They grasped the fundamental truths of the thought of their time, and stated them in terms that could be understood by all men. In some cases they reduced elaborate systems of philosophy to one or two simple terms. When Confucius was asked to define religion in one word, he replied, "Is not reciprocity the word?" Buddha's thought of religion can be expressed in the word,—renunciation. Zoroaster placed the emphasis upon purity, Moses upon law, and Mohammed upon obedience. Jesus summed up all the law and the prophets in the one word,—love. Thus in each case the founders of these great systems of religion grasped the underlying truth of the religious thought of their time and expressed it in simple terms that could be understood and used in a practical way by all men; and the truth thus enunciated became at once a source of spiritual power, producing a specific and vital effect in the spiritual life of the time. But we must observe that this increased spiritual vitality was not permanent, for the reason that the simple teachings of these men did not remain simple, and so lost much of their original power.

The tendency was always away from simplicity and directness, toward complexity and diffusiveness. No sooner had these great teachers ceased to state truth in simple, comprehensible terms, than the process of addition and multiplication began to modify and corrupt their teachings. This process may be compared to the progress of a stream of water. Up in the mountain height a spring sends forth its clear, pure

water. This water, bubbling over the rocks, makes a channel for itself and soon assumes the proportions of a rivulet. Farther down the slope this stream of pure water is joined by another stream bearing its quota of foreign elements. Soon another stream is received, then another, and another, until at last the rivulet becomes a vast river spreading over miles of territory, and corrupted by every kind of impurity which has been drained into it by its countless tributaries. We look now in vain in this turgid, muddy flood for the clearness and purity of the spring in the remote height. So systems of religion tend ever to increase their bulk at the expense of their purity. Beginning in the lofty thought of some great teacher who perceives truth clearly and states it in simple terms of power, they receive, in the course of time, so many tributaries of thought, bearing elements wholly foreign to the spirit and purpose of their founder's teachings, that they finally lose the essential quality of the original message and become merely a vast mixture of rules, forms, dogmas and traditions.

Buddhism serves as a striking illustration of this process of modification and corruption to which all systems of religion are subject. As a cult it has been driven completely out of the land of its origin, and the essential spirit and meaning of its founder's teachings have been obscured by things foreign to his thought.

This tendency of all systems of religion to become corrupted and diffused in power is equally operative

in the case of the Christian religion. In the course of time Christianity has become turgid and impure with the addition of many elements foreign to its original spirit and purpose. The great need of Christianity today is to be purged of its burden of foreign elements. A prophet is needed with the ability to perceive the fundamental truths at the heart of this great religion and to restate them in terms of simplicity and power.

This is precisely what our Unitarian churches are attempting to do. As a religious fellowship we think that we have discerned the simple truth at the heart of Christianity. We now desire to restate that truth in such simple terms that it will regain its lost power and become again a vital influence in the lives of men.

Here is something which we feel ought to be done for Christianity, and the mere fact that as a fellowship of churches we see that it ought to be done obligates us to try to do it.

This is the vision of service that has come to us, and we have accepted it as our mission. It may be that other Christian denominations do not so clearly see the necessity of a Christian reformation of this kind, and so do not share our vision of service. But to us of the Unitarian fellowship this necessity appears as a specific and important work to which we have been called, and to the performance of which we must devote our denominational energies.

Now what are the fundamental truths at the heart of Christianity? Let us see if we can discover the

thought and spirit of Jesus underneath the vast bulk of foreign matter which obscures the meaning and minimizes the power of the Christianity of our time. In order to make our statement clear, let us first observe what Jesus himself did for the system of religion which he found established in the national life of his people.

Judaism in the time of Jesus had suffered the fate of all great systems of religion. Beginning in the simple laws and precepts of Moses, it had received, in the course of time, so many tributaries of thought that it had lost nearly all resemblance to the teachings of its founder. The Mosaic law had become a dead weight upon the nation. Rival sects were wrangling over trivial and absurd questions of form and ceremony and usage. The Sadducees, representing the party of political aristocracy, were arrayed against the Pharisees, the party of cherished traditions. The scribes were interpreting the scriptures in terms of a dead letter. The priests were trying to appease the imaginary wrath of God with innumerable sacrifices of helpless animals. To the original simplicity of the Mosaic law the various rabbinical schools had added some six hundred and thirteen injunctions which had become binding upon the people. To disregard one of the least of these commandments of the Talmuds was considered almost as dangerous as the breaking of the law itself; so that the man who tried to be religious according to the required standard was so perplexed by the very multitude of laws and rules and regulations that he had no time left for the consideration of anything else.

Jesus surveyed this complex system and pitied his people. He saw underneath this mass of letter and form the essential truth of Judaism, and restated it in terms of simplicity and power. Analyzing the Mosaic law, with its many accretions of rabbinical injunctions, he reduced the whole system to one simple term,—love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, heart, mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." This one word, he said, fulfilled the whole law of Moses. Then he considered the teachings of their prophets, extending over many centuries, and summed them all up in another word, —righteousness.

Love, he said, fulfilled both the law and the prophets, and the burden of all prophetic utterance was righteousness; so that to love God and man and to live a good life was the sum and substance of Judaism. We marvel at the simplicity of such a religious formula. Its power was immediately made manifest in the lives of men. That was something which men could understand and use in a practical way. The statement was as grain sifted from mountains of chaff, and as pure water dipped from a mountain spring, and the plain people sought this simple truth eagerly because it was to them the bread of life and the living water to quench the thirst of their souls. How accurately Jesus described his message when he likened it to the "bread from heaven" and the "well of living water."

Now we may state the mission of Unitarianism by saying that our Unitarian churches are attempting

to do for Christianity in this age what Jesus did for Judaism in his age—reduce it to its simplest terms, in order to purify it and make it a vital force again in the lives of men. Christianity has received, through the centuries, so many accretions of things wholly foreign to the thought and spirit of Jesus that it has lost nearly all resemblance to the religion which he taught. From many sources these tributaries of thought have been added to the original teachings. The pagan world has contributed many corrupting elements. From India and Egypt Christianity has received its doctrine of the triune God—three gods in one, one god in three persons. The Grecian, Roman and Scandinavian mythologies have added many of their names and ceremonies and customs. In the course of time many repulsive dogmas have found their way into the pure stream of Christian faith. Today we find in the doctrinal standards of the Church such barbarous survivals as the dogma of the Vicarious Atonement—the thought of appeasing the imaginary wrath of God with the blood of a human sacrifice made in the person of Jesus. Fantastic speculations by the Church Fathers, myths from semi-barbarous religions, and curious doctrines of an infallible church and an infallible book have all found lodgment in Christian theology. The accredited priests and teachers of Christianity in our age, like the scribes of old, are interpreting the scriptures in terms of a dead letter. On every side we witness the wrangling of rival sects, and meet everywhere the unchristian spirit of intolerance that seeks to exclude worthy

people from Christian fellowship on the mere pretext of doctrinal conformity. Surely it can be said that again the letter of the law of a great religion has become a dead weight upon the souls of men.

The Church has so confused the minds of men with its perplexing doctrines and its meaningless forms, rites, regulations and restrictions that the masses are in danger of drifting away from it altogether. Men who try to be religious according to its standards are so repelled by all this unchristian theology and practice that they are tempted to renounce religion once for all and forsake her shrines. The pure stream of Christian faith has become corrupted, and the water of life must again be purified.

Facing such a condition, is it presumptuous for a group of churches to undertake the task of simplifying and purifying the corrupted religion of Jesus? Rather is it not binding upon those who see this imperative need to meet it, as a matter of Christian duty, with enthusiasm and devotion?

Thus it becomes the duty of our Unitarian fellowship to restate Christianity in simple terms, to purge it of its foreign elements, and to purify it for the benefit of the generations to come. This our churches are attempting to do. Viewing the Christianity of today, with all its accumulated elements that tend to obscure its original spirit and purpose, we have summed up the gospel of Jesus in two words,—*love* and *righteousness*,—the two words which he used to express the truth at the heart of Judaism, and which we feel is the truth at the heart of all religion.

We have said to men that to love God and man and to live a righteous life is the sum and substance of the religion of Jesus Christ, and of all religion. And upon this statement of faith our Unitarian fellowship must stand or fall. We have gone back to the simple gospel of Jesus—to the very terms which he himself used to express his thought, and we propose to re-invest those simple terms with a new meaning and power, that his gospel may become again a vital force in the spiritual life of the world.

It has been said of us, as it was said of Jesus in his time, that we are seeking to destroy religion. We reply, as he replied to his accusers, that we are not come to destroy but to fulfill. We seek to break the bondage of the letter of his gospel in order to restore its spirit, that men may be able to distinguish between the form and the substance of pure religion, and so worship God in spirit and in truth.

What greater service could any religious fellowship render to society, or to Christianity itself?

[No. 282]

The Relation of THE LIBERAL CHURCHES AND THE FRATERNAL ORDERS

BY

ELIJAH ALFRED COIL

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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THE RELATION *of the* LIBERAL CHURCHES *and the* FRATERNAL ORDERS

TEXT:—*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all:* Eph. 4, 6.

"In the name of God, Amen."

Since weighing anchor, and setting sail for the new world, where Brewster and his devoted band hoped to enjoy the liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, sixty-three days had elapsed. The travel worn Pilgrims, gathered in the cabin of the Mayflower, formulated and signed that historic compact which Goldwin Smith says marks the passage "From the feudal age of privilege and force to the age of due submission and obedience to just and equal offices and laws, for our better ordering and preservation."

The unsettled conditions amid which the weary Pilgrims of 1620 were struggling to erect new standards and formulate new policies were, in a way, typical of those that exist now. A new compact is needed, and I do not believe a better introduction to it than that adopted by the formulators of the Mayflower compact can be found. It is in perfect keeping with the practices of many people of our day, constitutes a common ground on which to perform the act of individual and collective consecration, and yet does

not savor in the least of those controversies concerning dogmas and ceremonials that have created so much havoc among men.

Speaking of the theory of selection, the Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour says "It leaves untouched all that can be inferred from the existence of the conditions which make organic evolution possible; matter which lives, multiplies, and varies; an environment which possesses the marvelously complex constitution required to make these processes possible. Selection may modify these conditions, but it cannot start them. It may modify the manner in which multiplication is secured; it may modify the lines which variations follow; it may enable organic species to adapt their powers to their environment, and within narrow limits, their environment to their powers. But it can not produce either the original environment or the original living matter." At that point we are, so it seems to me, brought face to face with God, the "Directing mind" of the universe and Father of all mankind.

"In the name of God, Amen." Since all men have to grant a source from which all things proceed, and can account for law only as they grant a will to establish it, here is a declaration to which all can subscribe. It is when discussions about trinities and unities, and attributes, and the manner of revealing or manifesting are started that differences of opinion begin to appear, and divisions take place. We can be absolutely sure that there is a source from which finite self-consciousness proceeds; but as to the attributes of that source, and the manner of revealing

or manifesting itself to the finite, there is, as many sad events show, room for wide differences of opinion, and the possibility of much bitterness and persecution. This being true it seems clearly to be a departure from the path of wisdom to erect any set of opinions as to the attributes of the Infinite, and the methods whereby revelations or manifestations are made to the finite, into tests or conditions of fellowship, thus setting, as such a course invariably does, large bodies of earnest, conscientious people over against each other, sometimes in bitterness and strife. Thinking people will, of course, have their theories about the attributes of the Infinite, and as to the manner of making revelations to the finite, and relations therewith, but that those theories need be erected into tests or conditions of fellowship in order to enable men to stand together and work for both material and spiritual wellbeing has been so thoroughly disproved that a wayfaring man, though possessing but one eye, cannot well help seeing that such a course is not necessary.

Preceding and following the reformation of the sixteenth century two currents of thought and influence that have had much to do with the shaping of the life and forms of Protestant Christendom can be plainly discerned. One of them ran by way of the ninety-five theses nailed to the door of the church in Wittenberg, the Augsburg and Westminister confessions, the Thirty-nine Articles, aud many denominational creeds that have drawn their chief substance from them. That current, dogmatic and formal, found

embodiment and expression in the orthodox Protestant denominations of Europe and America. The other ran by way of Hungary, and St. Sebald's school in Nuremberg where Hans Denck was school master, and flowing on, touched the homes of Johann Bunderlin, Christian Entfelder, Jacob Boehme, John Everard, Sir Harry Vane and other continental and English leaders who put the emphasis on the spirit and life rather than on dogma and ceremonial. This current, ethical and spiritual, found embodiment and expression in the churches called liberal, and the great secret fraternal orders that have come to be such an important factor in modern life. Hans Denck declared himself as positively against the idea of imputed righteousness, insisting that no one can justly be classed and rewarded as righteous unless he actually is righteous. He would not allow that any moral or spiritual qualities could be imputed to a man unless they really entered into and constituted a part of his character. Christian Entfelder expressed a deep seated conviction, shared by the leaders of a great spiritual reformation, when he said: "In every age and in every land, the inner word of God, the voice of the spirit speaking within, clarifying the mind and training the spiritual perceptions by a progressive experience, has made for itself a chosen people." Sebastian Franck declared: "Nobody is the master of my faith, and I desire to be the master of the faith of no one. I love any man whom I can help, and I call him brother whether he be Jew or Samaritan." In those utterances there is clearly fore-

shadowed the great doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man. Entfelder and Franck sensed that vitalizing truth which Samuel Longfellow embodied in his inspiring hymn entitled "The Church Universal," one stanza of which runs as follows:

> "Her priests are all God's faithful sons,
> To serve the world raised up;
> The pure in heart her baptized ones;
> Love her communion cup."

Early in the eighteenth century, a few earnest men interpreting religion in ethical and spiritual terms, and anxious to escape the disrupting controversies and prejudicies incident to insistance upon a dogmatic or ceremonial test of fellowship, chose James Anderson, minister of the Scottish Presbyterian church in Piccadilly, London, and John Theophilus Desaguliers, son of a French Protestant clergyman, with other men of recognized ability, to construct, out of ancient Masonic principles and practices a constitution for the Grand Lodge of England. They recommended "A universal creed, on the plan of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Mankind", one that would include good men of all forms of religion, all nationalities, and all stations in life. The new constitution, which they formulated and recommended, was adopted in 1723, and on that basis an institution almost as extensive as humanity, and noted for its effective work in many spheres of life, has been built up.

Because it exalted character above creed and rank,

speculative Freemasonry aroused the opposition of both the supporters of dogmatic and ceremonial forms of religion, and the beneficiaries of royalty. The priestly class soon saw that to allow real liberty of thought and conscience in things dogmatic and ceremonial, and the conditioning of fellowship upon character alone, would undermine and utterly destroy their authority, and they, therefore, set themselves resolutely against the institution. Then there was so much democracy in the institution as it appeared in its new form and dress that crowned heads and the nobility quickly discerned that it was inimical to their selfish interests, and it was vigorously opposed by them. Figuratively speaking, a comely child had been born into the world, but there was no room found for it in the ecclesiastical and royal inn. Having been rejected by ecclesiasticism and royalty, the new born child turned to the common people, was gladly received, and now, grown into a giant of mighty proportions, is the source of many blessings to mankind.

We now have many other secret fraternal organizations; but most of them have also embodied the principle of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man in their constitutions, and other pronouncements. As an instance, I cite the monument erected in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1865 and dedicated to the memory of Thomas Wildey by the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows. On the north side of the base of that monument there are inscribed these words: "He who realizes that the true mission of

man on earth is to rise above the level of individual influence, and to recognize the fatherhood of God over all, and the brotherhood of Man, is nature's true nobleman". To this principle, embodied in the constitutions and literature of our great secret orders, there are pledged hundreds of thousands of men, representing many forms of religion; but working together in peace and harmony. These organizations cultivate reverence for the Infinite, most of them opening and closing their meetings with prayer. They raise and insist upon high moral standards, promote large philanthropies, and establish true and helpful friendships among many who might otherwise have remained perpetually separated and prejudiced against each other. In fact they are bringing together, and uniting in the bonds of a real and practical friendship, many whom the churches have separated. Although bitterly opposed for a long time by many of the churches, these institutions have grown so strong, and have so commended themselves to thoughtful people, that opposition to them has greatly weakened and is rapidly disappearing.

It is becoming more and more clear to me, as the facts relating to the subject are brought out, that the fraternities, and the churches called liberal, have been working along parallel lines for years; but, because the one put the chief emphasis upon the fatherhood of God and therefore emphasized theology, while the other put the chief emphasis upon the brotherhood of Man and therefore emphasized sociology, they have not realized that they were occupying practically the

same ground. They have not therefore always supplemented each other's work as they should have done. Evidences of a better understanding are now appearing, and there is promise that real cooperation will ensue.

The more I learn of the origin, history and liturgies of the great fraternities of today, the more amazed I become that the kinship between them and the liberal churches was not clearly discerned a half century ago. Also, the more I learn of the fundamental principles of the great fraternities, the more interested do I become in the fact that many people who denounce the churches called liberal enthusiastically endorse, as fraternity men, the very principles for which those churches stand. I have often thought, in recent years, that I should like to organize a Sunday school class, and use as a text book the monitors of our leading fraternal orders, and show the members of those organizations the logic of the principles to which they, in their lodges, are pledged. Nearly all of those monitors have, as their very heart, the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, immortality, and salvation by character, principles very familiar to every Unitarian Sunday school scholar who has been properly taught the fundamentals of our faith.

That the fundamental difference in the principles embodied in the historic creeds of Christendom and those of our modern secret orders has not been clearly thought out is indicated by the fact that many pledge themselves to both. There are lodge

men who, in the churches, subscribe to the doctrine that "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, by faith and not for our own works or deservings," and enthusiastically join in the singing of hymns in which that idea is embodied. Then in their lodge meetings they just as enthusiastically assent to the following declaration: "Although our thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, yet that All-Seeing Eye whom the sun, moon and stars obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits." A little child, once its attention is called to the matter, ought to be able to see that it is impossible to harmonize the creed statement here quoted, with the declaration taken from the monitor of one of our greatest and most effective secret orders, and found, in substance, in the liturgies of nearly all the others. If "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ by faith and not for our own works or deservings," then it cannot possibly be true that the All-Seeing Eye "Pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits." One of these declarations excludes the other. Men cannot consistently subscribe to both. They do, however, subscribe to both, and are thereby led into inconsistencies which they do not discern. Although the Rev. W. A. Sunday denounces the principle of salvation by character,

and declares: "The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man are the worst rot ever dug out of hell," it nevertheless often happens that the lodges, pledged to the very things he thus characterizes and condemns, go in bodies to hear him and seem to approve his utterances. The fact that they do this does not indicate that they are deliberately inconsistent but rather that they subordinate reason to sentiment and emotion on such occasions. That confusion and weakness are resulting from the course many are now pursuing in thus pledging themselves to one set of principles in their churches, and to another set in their lodges, is so apparent that all who see conditions as they really are should count it a privilege to help clear the atmosphere and bring about a more consistent course.

If ever there was an age in which clear thinking and conscientious action were needed it is the one in which we live. The inadequacy of the dogmatic and ceremonial forms of religion is being more clearly shown every day. That is why I say a new compact is needed, and it should be so formulated that the good people of all lands, races and forms of religion can unite upon it. As conditions now are, earnest men are anxiously inquiring: "What must the church do to be saved?" Addressing the one thousand five hundred delegates attending, in Baltimore, Maryland, a convention called in the interest of missionary work, Fred B. Smith of New York was reported as saying, refering to the most frightful, destructive and unchristian war the world has ever

seen: "The war has set the kingdom of God back one hundred years. Civilization stands condemned. The kingdom of Christ will never be brought about by segregated sectarianism." I believe that is true; but we are sure to have segregated sectarianism just so long as there is insistence upon dogmas and ceremonials as tests of fellowship and conditions of salvation. But the awful war to which Mr. Smith refers, and in the thought of which we are so dazed that it is impossible to find words that will express our feelings, is not the only blot on the civilization of today. There is bitter and wide-spread strife in the industrial world; drunkenness and its appalling consequences; commercialized vice with its attendant disease and degredation, and many other things, that might be enumerated, which go to show the inadequacy of the prevailing forms of religious thought and practice to meet the needs of this age. The time has come when men should be taught, in no uncertain terms, that they cannot bring on wars with their awful consequences; promote drunkenness, traffic in vice and do the hundred other things being done which degrade humanity and intensify suffering, and then be saved through the merits of another and not for their own works or deservings. It should be made clear to them that we are all children of one Father, and that, as members of a common household, we cannot escape sharing in the conditions which we help to create in this world, and that our harvest "Over there" will be determined by just what we sow here. This is what the liberal church and most of

our fraternities are trying to impress upon the world.

Seeing the conditions that now obtain after some hundreds of years, during which the dogmatic and ceremonial form of religion has been in the ascendency, it would seem that those who question the adequacy of that form, and are trying earnestly to put an ethical and spiritual form of religion in its place, would receive more consideration than they do at the hands of those who are trying to revive the old system, and bring the people back to the churches by way of the tabernacle. If the medical profession found their remedies as unavailing as war and other attendant evils show the dogmatic and ritualistic form of religion to be, and some one proposed a new remedy that had proven as effective in the physical sphere as our ethical and spiritual form of religion has proven itself, I believe the representatives of that profession would gladly try the remedy, and thank those proffering it for their interest and desire to help.

Looking at the world as it is today begets the conviction that there must be a better way than the one which the majority has been following. That better way, I am sure, has been clearly indicated. It consists in the reverent practical recognition of the Infinite from whom we all proceed as universal father, and that necessary corollary, the universal brotherhood of Man, and then in building upon that foundation a super-structure of reverence, temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice which will insure a

nobler type of manhood and a better society. To these things the liberal churches are pledged, and these are the very principles most of our great secret orders are striving to uphold and promote. Our spiritual and ethical relations are very close even though we may not hitherto have recognized that fact. Seeing the relationship we should act upon it and so supplement each other's work as to make it more effective for good. Fraternity men, interested in the welfare of their children, should be informed that in the liberal churches their children will be trained in principles which they will not practically have to deny should they become members of the lodge. This is something of far greater importance than it may at first seem.

To develop the noblest type of manhood and womanhood, and insure the best possible society, a beginning must be made at the cradle. That is why the home and Sunday school and church have it in their power to do a most important work in the development of the right kind of character. They can take and mold the child as no other institution can. The fraternities, constituted as they are, cannot do it. Experience shows that to be indifferent to the moral and spiritual wellbeing of the children, at the same time cherishing the hope that some institution can take the full grown men or women, early training having been neglected, and shape them into a noble and satisfactory society is to heap up bitter disappointment, the hurt of which cannot be evaded. It is time for a general awakening to this fact, and with

that awakening there needs to come a general realization that the people and organizations pledged to the same principles should understand each other better and try to supplement each other's endeavors in such a manner as to insure the very best and largest possible results. I have already shown that, as it is now, many people are, unthinkingly and unconsciously, in most cases, I think, pledging themselves to principles as irreconcilable as fire and water. The result is loss of interest and strength on the part of many without their being able to explain why. As an illustration of what I mean, here is an actual experience which, in one form or another, is duplicated many times a year. A member of an "Orthodox" church said to me: "Although I go to church regularly, I can not enthuse over church work as I once did, and I regret the fact very much." Noting that he wore the emblem of a great fraternity, I asked: "Do you attend lodge regularly?" Upon his answering in the affirmative, I said; "Let me diagnose your case." He assented and I proceeded thus: "You go to lodge where you are taught the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, and salvation by character, and it all seems so reasonable to you that you heartily approve the teaching. You then go to church on Sunday where you are taught that we are not the children of God, except as we become such through the process of adoption; that only those men who have had a kindred religious experience and subscribe to specified dogmas and conform to certain ritualistic requirements are brothers in the religious

sense; that salvation is not by character, but through 'The merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith and not for our own works or deservings,' and that teaching does not satisfy your sense of reason and justice, therefore, deep down in your heart you do not believe it, hence your waning interest in church work." He looked at me steadily for a moment, and then said: "I did not realize my difficulty, but I think you have diagnosed my case exactly." Thousands of men are as that man is, and when they come to realize their condition, and get their thoughts clearly defined, and properly related in their own minds, they will come to be more enthusiastically religious than ever they were before. They will be less dogmatic, but have more reverence for God, less sectarian, but more brotherly and helpful; less concerned about their personal salvation, but more earnest in their endeavors to uplift and transform the world by overcoming evil with good.

Now I am ready to make my appeal to you. I want you to realize that to neglect the moral and spiritual training of the young, or to teach them principles so out of harmony with the general trend of thought that they are almost sure to be held indifferently or given up entirely in later life, is to invite moral and religious calamity. Study those ages in which long established forms of religious faith have broken down and you will get the force of what I am now saying. I have been devoting much time to an investigation of the subject, and I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that the liberal

churches, from their beginning, have been developing in thought and sentiment, along the same lines as those followed by most of our great modern fraternities. They have championed and advocated the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, immortality, and salvation by character, and these are the very principles for which nearly all the great fraternities stand. Taught these principles in childhood, as they should be taught them in the Sunday schools and churches, people will not have to unlearn or deny them should they choose to identify themselves with almost any one of our present day fraternities, as those brought up in "Orthodox" Sunday schools and churches have to unlearn, deny or ignore much that has been taught them if they become members of a lodge. And it is most important that they be taught to the children in the Sunday schools. It is, as a rule, in childhood that life characters are formed. Feeling the tremendous importance of this phase of the subject, I appeal to you brethren, in the name of God, Father of us all, to wake up and realize your great responsibilities and your glorious opportunities. If we really believe in the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, immortality and salvation by character, then we should do something more in our church than fill a pew occasionally and make our annual contribution to its financial support. We should come fully to realize the great need of a complete understanding and harmonious endeavor on the part of all institutions that are striving to work out, along the same lines, a nobler destiny for mankind. The liberal churches and

many of our great fraternities have, as I have shown you, a common basis. We should fully realize the great importance of seeing to it that the children of all who approve that basis, and want to see it strengthened and perpetuated, are taught principles that are in complete harmony with it. We should count it a great privilege to help bring about a consummation so important and so devoutly to be wished. We should lose no opportunity to let those fraternity people, whose faith in the dogmatic and ceremonial form of religion is breaking down, know that there is a church in which they can find a home, and in whose Sunday schools their children can be taught principles which they, as fraternity people, have already enthusiastically approved.

As the children of God, we are all members of the same household, and must therefore share in the family conditions we help to create. We should realize this and cultivate the spirit manifested by Abraham when his herdmen and those of Lot entered into strife over the pasture lands which they desired for the herds of their respective masters. Knowing that there was enough for all, and to spare, Abraham appealed thus to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren." That should be our cry to the world. We are all brethren, and our Father has provided abundantly for the whole household. Once we recognize his goodness, and our relationship, in such a practical way as the principle of salvation by character implies, the implica-

tion of which is the reproduction, in all lives, of the reverence, love and service that so wondrously characterized the life of Jesus of Nazareth, mutual respect and helpfulness will become universal, and we can then truthfully and triumphantly sing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

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WHAT MAY THE LIVING THINK OF THE DEAD?

BY

REV. HORATIO STEBBINS, D.D.

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HORATIO STEBBINS

Horatio Stebbins was born in Wilbraham, Mass., on the 8th of August, 1821, and died in Cambridge, Mass., April 8, 1902. After his graduation at Phillips Exeter Academy, he entered Harvard College, graduating in the class of 1848.

He immediately entered Harvard Divinity School, and after his graduation accepted a call to the First Parish Church, Fitchburg, Mass., where he was ordained on the 5th day of November, 1851.

After three years at Fitchburg, he was installed as colleague to the Rev. Ichabod Nichols, over the First Parish of Portland, Me. Here he distinguished himself as a preacher of unusual power and fearlessness.

The eminent preacher, Thomas Starr King, who was minister of the First Unitarian Church at San Francisco, Cal., died on the 4th of March, 1864, and Mr. Stebbins was called to take his place. Here he remained until February, 1899, when he was made *pastor emeritus.*

He is chiefly remembered for his great work in California. "He was a man of large frame, and commanding presence, with a voice of great scope and rare beauty. His character was in harmony with his appearance. He was of singular moral elevation and richness of nature."

He was president of the trustees of the College of California, trustee of the Inebriate Asylum for twenty-six years, was regent of the University of California, and also a trustee of the Lick School of Mechanical Arts, and the helper of many men and women who through their own folly, misfortune, or ignorance, had become stranded on the distant coast. Dr. Stebbins published many sermons and addresses.

☞ *See "Heralds of a Liberal Faith," (American Unitarian Association), Vol. III, Page 348.*

WHAT MAY THE LIVING THINK OF THE DEAD?

By Rev. Horatio Stebbins, D.D.,

When a boy, I sat beneath the shadow of an oak at noontide, to eat my luncheon. I had taken with me a little book of the early printed sermons of Orville Dewey, that great preacher of a former generation, whose fine sensibility, tender pathos, and deep moral insight illumined the minds and impressed the hearts of his fellow-men with that mingled influence of reason and feeling which is the climax of power in all great teachers. After luncheon, I lay flat upon the ground and read thus: "The world is filled with the voices of the dead. * * * They speak to us in a thousand remembrances, in a thousand incidents, events and associations. They speak to us not only from their silent graves, but from the throng of life. Though they are invisible, yet life is filled with their presence. They are with us by the silent fireside, and in the secluded chamber; they are with us in the paths of society, and in the crowded assemblies of men. They speak to us from the lonely wayside, and they speak to us from the venerable walls that echo to the steps of a multitude and to the voice of prayer. Go where we will, the dead are with us. We live, we converse, with those who once lived and conversed with us. Their well-remembered tone

mingles with the whispering breezes, with the sound of the falling leaf, with the jubilee shout of the spring-time. The earth is filled with their shadowy train."

The words sank deep into my boyish heart, tempered the air and toned the light of the sweet June day. Time and experience have purified, refined and strengthened the impression. We cannot escape the conviction that as our own spiritual nature becomes strengthened by thought and feeling, we are more interested in those who have gone before us to the spiritual world. According to the development of our own characters, the memory of those who once walked with us here gains elevation, purity and power. The words of Jesus seem to be fulfilled in all the dead: "If I be lifted up, I shall draw all men unto me." It is no vain speech when we say "The Mighty Dead!" When we read Plato, Milton, Shakespeare, Emerson, we feel that death has exalted and refined their power; and in the circle of private friendship, those whom perhaps we knew too familiarly to know them well while living, seem like strong angels now that death has taken them from our sight. We think, and imagine, and hope, and wonder, and ask:

"But tell us, thou bird of the solemn strain,
  Can those who have loved, forget?
We call—but they answer not again—
  Do they love, do they love us yet?
We call them far through the silent night,
  And they speak not from cave nor hill;
We know, we know, that their land is bright,
  But say, do they love there still?"

The heart bereft of childhood beauty finds natural expression in that "canticle of woe" that echoes to the sound of human sorrow:—

"The South-wind brings
  Life, sunshine and desire,
And on every mount and meadow
  Breathes aromatic fire;
But over the dead he has no power.
The lost, the lost, he cannot restore;
And, looking over the hills, I mourn
The darling who shall not return—"

* * * * * * *

"And whither now, my truant wise and sweet,
O, whither tend thy feet?
I had the right, few days ago,
Thy steps to watch, thy place to know;
Now have I forfeited the right?
Hast thou forgot me in a new delight?"

And so we think and wonder concerning the conditions of the life after death. It is quite natural that many vague and contradictory thoughts should arise when we consider that neither New Testament, philosophy nor experience give any clue to the details of the future life. The heart has its longings, imaginings and fears, and these have had a natural expression of their own, often vague or fanciful, and sometimes absurd. Doubtless the attempts to picture the future state with careful detail of fact and circumstance have often been mistaken and overdone. It is easy for our modern knowledge to explode the fancies of romance and the literalism of unpoetic poets. The more thoughtful men of to-day do not attach much importance to the representations of the

details of the future. But while many notions are felt to be unsatisfactory, it is to be feared that in some minds nothing better has taken their place. Yet it is no idle curiosity that prompts our search into the future, and to get a true view of the hereafter we need to eliminate from our minds some common errors. If it is true that we have given up the idea of having an accurate map of the world to come, there still lingers in our minds the bold, vast and striking contrasts of *locality* and *condition*—Heaven and Hell, Happiness and Misery—are mixed with our thoughts as the antipodes of *place* and *condition*, in relation to those who have gone before us. The notion of place or locality is a relic of the doctrine of migration of souls, and of the belief that accompanied it, that Heaven was a place just above the skies and Hell a dungeon at the center of the earth.

But let us treat vagaries of thought and errors of belief with generous sympathy. They have a root in the soil of human want. If we have given up fanciful details and minute descriptions of the future, and fallen back upon the extremes of *locality* and *condition*, and are persuaded that there is still some mischief in this, let us get at the root of it, and we shall see that the sentiments in which these beliefs arise are quite natural. They are a broad, free stroke of moral idea, giving the eternal distinction between good and evil and anticipating retribution. There is nothing absurd in that.

Let us not be offended at metaphorical language.

There can be no world of ideas to us without it. When Luther writes to his little son about a garden where children play and sing and jump, dressed in golden coats, and ride beautiful little horses, with gold bits and silver saddles, and have fifes and trumpets and all sorts of music, and shoot with little cross-bows, and tells him to pray away, and learn well, and be good, so that he may come to the garden, we are not offended at the picture of happiness held up to the heart of a child as the reward of love and duty! So when prophets and poets of an earlier age have put good and evil wide apart, and set them in contrast of celestial light and infernal darkness, when they have made robes and palms to prefigure the life and joy and victory of righteousness, and made the dark abyss and gulfs of vaporous fire to represent the suffering and misery of wickedness, we see what a natural use the metaphors have, and we understand that none but a clumsy, half-taught, unfledged mind could deride them, though we might have no special use for them ourselves. Crude as this contrast of locality and condition may seem to science or philosophy or common sense, to understand its root and vital meaning is essential to all worthy appreciation of religious thought. It will save us, too, from wasting our breath and showing our want of moral sympathy in abusing old doctrines that we have outgrown, because they had a seed of truth in them that helped us outgrow them.

Saved from this, we shall be saved from two great errors that arise in this notion of locality and condi-

tion: The error of supposing that the future is only the present intensified, the good going on to better, the bad going on to worse; and the opposite error of thinking that the future has no connection with the past whatever, death effacing all records and opening a new account. The one error is in thinking that the future is wholly dependent on the past; the other is in thinking that this world and the next have no relation or correspondence whatever. If we have a true idea of the metaphors, Heaven and Hell, we shall not fall into the gross literalism of extremes of place and condition, but we shall conceive the vast difference between the future and the present, and yet the intimate relation and dependence of the future and the present.

What is the difference between the present and the future? It is a common saying that history repeats itself. But that is very incomplete and often misleading. While the present is evolved from the past, it has some elements that the past had not; and while the future will be evolved from the present, it will have some elements which the present has not. "The child is father of the man," but the man is not the repetition of the child. "Tall oaks from little acorns grow," but tall oaks are not little acorns over again. This world is a seed-plot, and the soul of man is not a finished product, but a vital germ. And here Paul shows his deep moral insight, his splendor of idea and grandeur of conception. His metaphor of the seed overtops all theory, and reveals to the imagination ever new horizons. "It is sown a natural body, it is

raised a spiritual body." The difference between the present and the future is the difference between the seed and flower. The present on a large scale, or repeating itself, is an inadequate notion. Who from looking at a bushel of seed corn, would be aware of the brightness and beauty of a field of waving grain? "*Now* we are the sons of God, but it doth not clearly appear what we *shall be*." If any man has got the idea that the next world is simply an enlarged edition of this, let him think more soberly and he will think more spiritually.

Yet, notwithstanding this difference between that which is and that which shall be, so vividly suggested by these analogies, there is a dependence and continuity. Every seed after its kind. All teaching, of Bible and Nature, points to a correspondence between the natural seed and the spiritual flower, to a proportion between this life and the life to come. Herein is written the law of retribution, which cannot be violated, but is to be fulfilled in every human soul—in him that soweth to the flesh and in him that soweth to the spirit. The senses cannot reveal the things that we shall receive. And here, in trying on the plane of the senses to be too definite about things, we fall into error. But there are some broad distinctions of reason and religion which we may safely trust.

For instance, it does not appear that all individuals will be merged in one consciousness. The teachings of Jesus do not look toward that; and what we know of every seed after its kind, does not look toward

that. Apple-seed and apple-blossom, present cause and future effect, seem to be more likely; as in the world of nature, so in the world of mind. Who can doubt that earthly experiences, all our well intended efforts, whether failures or successes, our trials and sorrows, and sincere penitences and unselfish sufferings, will give their tint and color to the bloom of our being? Is there anything improbable in it? Is not that worthy, in the light of reason, to be a great belief, even a belief that is a religion in itself? Is there anything in such a belief that would work any ill either to the man who held it or to his fellow-men? Is there anything in it that is unworthy our Maker as he is revealed to us, our Father in Heaven, by Jesus Christ? Does it not harmonize with all that we know of nature, reason and God?

Has this law of seed and flower, cause and effect, the law of continuity which binds the universe together, a tone of severity? It has surely, as all righteous law has, and carries with it a legitimate and wholesome fear. If we are to reap what we have sown, some, perhaps most of us, may dread the harvest. But let us be true to ourselves. Have we come to that supreme excellence of love which casteth out fear? Are we beyond the need of the wise teaching of fear? Are we, average men and women, so far in advance of the world and mankind that we can go on without the influence of fear? The world does not; do we, as a matter of fact, go on without it? No, not one. There is a great deal of softness and sentimentality in our time, consequent upon letting go

some of the arbitrary severities of former days. But let us stand erect, and proclaim the righteousness of God's judgments. They are not arbitrary and vindictive, but they separate truth from falsehood. To be brought to God's judgment is to be brought to a discernment of the truth in regard to ourselves. It is to see and feel just what we are, and to confess in our inmost hearts that the verdict of God's commandment is just and righteous altogether. "I judge no man, but my word shall judge him at the last day." Is it sensible to suppose that God's law is to be suspended in the spiritual world, and that His mercy is a weak connivance to get around His own law? That law, like His love, is in heaven and in hell. Is punishment abolished because our minds are liberated from the idea of a physical hell? Are there no pains but those of the body? Have we not, sometime or other, passed judgment upon ourselves, and been plunged in moral anguish, as the insufferable light of God's spirit lit up every dark recess of our being? What is this feeling that comes over us all, the feeling that we are not what we ought to be, nor what we might have been? Is there not a depth of wretchedness in which the human creature finds himself just where he belongs, and owns that his condition is of his own making, and that his only way of escape from it is to endure it as the merciful and just judgment of God? Can any man, whose life has gone deep enough to give what may be called a moral experience, say there is not good reason in this for a wise, holy and purifying fear? There is surely nothing degrading in such

fear, neither cowardice nor severity, but a heart-searching reverence and awe in the sincere and humble conviction that God's law is everywhere, in the present and in the future, at once the chastisement and the hope of the heart of man.

I know that this raises the question of probation after death. But while we do not affect to know the future too accurately, we can never utterly lose our reckoning in a moral world. All goodness is after the likeness of God's goodness, and our human patterns of excellence give us the suggestion that He is infinitely better and that His chastisements must forever be for our good. Punishment does not consist in heaping up misery infinitely, but in adapting it to the moral condition and want of the sufferer. Cruelty never becomes divine, neither do justice, wisdom and mercy run into weakness and folly. We err when we undertake to be too particular about the future, yet while we may not be over-curious, we have some great landmarks that we can trust. Human goodness is our guide to God's goodness, which is better than man's and human injustice and wickedness can never become God's righteousness and love.

These, if not definite and minute directions, are nevertheless great landmarks by which we may know whether we are going north or south. Here is room for trust, and for some magnanimity toward Him with whom we have to do. Had you rather have a specific contract with your Maker, or "trust Him for his grace?" As for me, I speak it reverently, I want no contract with my Maker. His righteousness and

wisdom and love are better than any agreement.

When we speak of supreme honor among men, we say of such an one: "His word is as good as his bond;" which means that he is always good for all pure and honorable things. So we may say of God, and trust Him wholly to conduct us through such various stages of discipline, and waiting and working and suffering as He shall see fit for us.

If these thoughts, and such as these, are just and true, may we not—encouraged by great hopes and chastened by purifying fears—think of all the dead with comfort and peace? Following these great general directions, keeping in view these great landmarks, may we not reasonably and reverently think that the unnumbered populations of the unseen world, greater than all the nations of the earth, are not consigned to two extreme conditions, the one of perfect bliss and the other of hopeless agony and despair? Are the souls that have risen, as the mist rises from the sea, going onward to that more spiritual sphere of being, withdrawn from the wise severities and merciful chastisements of the Maker? Such a thought confuses us, puts us out, nor heavens nor stars give us any direction, neither does the sun of eternal righteousness cast the shadow of any tree north or south.

Stand with me at the death-bed of some average human being like ourselves. It is a silent, thoughtful scene: "The lone soul to the lone God." Did you know him? How was it with him? Is there a being on earth that can tell the shade of his character, the power of circumstance, the weight of responsibil-

ity? He was very much like you and me—no saint, surely—yet not given up to wickedness. Will good sense, tempered by true feeling, pronounce his destiny in the "lump sum" of perfect bliss, or irretrievable agony?

Or stand by the grave of Robert Burns, that strange creature, the personification of nobleness and weakness, of Paul's *would do good, but evil was present with him*, and read his own verse, written in moments of deep humility, self-abasement, penitence and grief:

> "Is there a man whose judgment clear
> Can others teach the course to steer,
> Yet runs himself life's mad career,
> Wild as the wave?
> Here let him pause, and through a tear
> Survey this grave."

> "The poor inhabitant below,
> Was quick to learn and wise to know,
> And keenly felt the friendly glow
> And softer flame;
> But thoughtless follies laid him low
> And stained his name."

Who can read these lines, and send the lovely poet and foolish bard either to heaven or hell, but rather to the chastening retributions and cheering tender mercies of God? Who does not feel that the holy providences and wise corrections of the Almighty are from everlasting to everlasting, and that the immortal dead of all ages and kingdoms and generations are doomed to no extremes of misery or blessedness, but each one chastened and corrected, according to his moral want, by the retributions of eternity?

I know the strong desire of many minds for what they call more definite views. It is this desire that localized the future in the two opposite extremes of destiny. Is it not better to have a more reasonable hope, of larger dimensions, if that hope can be firmly held? Accurate direction is the demand of childhood, ignorance and fear. And, after all, is it a vague or low-toned thought that teaches that all the dead who have gone from this earth since time began are with God, the Father, as Jesus revealed him?

At any rate, choose more definite and minute views who will, may we not think of the dead in such a way of simple and true human feeling, and natural human interest, as will set us free from all degrading thoughts, and purify our minds with reverent fear and inspiring hope? May we not think hopefully of all who have gone before? May we not love them still, remember them in our prayers to God, and know that for them death can have no sting?

This opens before us an ever widening career, the spiritual world becomes our home, and the feeling that we are strangers on the earth gives way to the feeling that where our friends are there we would be. The pursuit of the great end is not limited by the grave, but prepared to embrace greater realities hereafter. And we see clearly how self-indulgence and ignoble luxury and feeble idleness, not to speak of darker sins, make us unfit and unable to be companions of the Eternal Goodness: and that every pure desire and humble service of God and man unites us to that which is most loved and revered on earth or in heaven.

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Address communications and contributions to the

American Unitarian Association

25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

[No. 284]

DID JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD?

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

BY
CLAYTON R. BOWEN

Professor of New Testament Interpretation, in the Meadville Theological School at Meadville, Pa. Author of "The Resurrection in the New Testament," "The Gospel of Jesus," etc., etc.

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25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

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BY

CLAYTON R. BOWEN

The Christian religion has from the beginning cherished the faith that the human spirit is immortal, that man is the eternal child of an eternal Father. And this high faith the church has always affirmed by insisting on its realization in the after-death experience of the founder and Master of the church. The conviction among Jesus' earliest followers that, though he had died, he was not dead, was the greatest contribution ever made to the faith in the soul's immortality. Never in all history, before or since, has there been such absolute assurance of the persistence of a human life beyond the experience of death. That primitive Christian assurance, commonly summed up in the phrase, "Jesus rose from the dead," we are now briefly to examine.

If we ask: What were the experiences of Jesus after he bowed his head and gave up the ghost on the cross in Jerusalem that long-ago April afternoon, a moment's reflection will show us that our question is in this form unanswerable. In the very nature of the case, we can have no account of what he then experienced; from beyond the veil he has sent no report. What we can have, and what we do have, is an account of the experiences of still living men who had known and loved him, and of their belief concerning what had happened to him.

Such an account we have from the great missionary Paul, who, though not himself one of the friends and disciples of the living Jesus, was intimately acquainted with those who were, and knew from their own lips of their experiences and their interpretation of them. His report is then to all intents their report, or, in his own words, "Whether then it be I or they, so we preach."

What was this account, which Paul says that he "received" from those earliest disciples? It was briefly this. Jesus had expired on the cross and his body had almost immediately been buried. Some time later (the account unfortunately does not say when) he had appeared in vision to his leading disciple Peter. A little later he had similarly appeared to the rest of the Twelve; then the vision came to a gathering of Jesus' followers, more than five hundred in number. After that the visions multiplied. James saw his dead brother, and for the first time became his follower and a missionary in his cause; others who had known the Master were called one by one by such visions to be messengers of his gospel.

These appearances of the glorified Master from his heavenly life recalled all these men from the despondency which had overtaken them at the catastrophe of his death, filled them with new life and heart, made them sure of the truth of all that Jesus had declared. God had raised him from the dead, thus proving that he was the Messiah; they must now go out among men and proclaim this great thing. The visions made missionaries of these men, apostles with a glorious

message; they gave them strength and stability that made noble martyrs out of some of them, made them such men as they had not been while Jesus lived.

The visions they interpreted, of course, as genuine appearances of their departed Master. They believed that when his spirit left his body on the cross, it descended to Hades, the world of the dead, as does every human spirit which leaves the body. But unlike every other spirit which had entered Hades, the spirit of Jesus did not linger there among the dead, but almost immediately was set free again by the power of God, and exalted to heaven. For "almost immediately" they said: on the third day, a phrase familiar in their thought and usage. From heaven the risen Jesus appeared to his followers (as later to Paul), shed divine influences upon their hearts and lives, was the Master and guide of his rapidly-growing church in a far stronger degree than he had been, or could have been, while in the flesh. This, in brief, is what Paul and the earliest Christians meant by Jesus' rising from the dead. Their experiences and their belief had no concern whatever with the grave or with the buried body; they imagined no revival of that body, no appearance of it. What rose, what appeared, was Jesus' soul, spirit, personality, self.

But by and by this view began to be misunderstood, out in the pagan world, far from the place of Jesus' life and death. Confusion arose in the minds of men, who could think of the renewed life of the dead only in material terms. Former pagans in Corinth who

had become followers of Jesus under Paul's preaching, were in confusion here, associating somehow the physical body with resurrection, and therefore somewhat skeptical about its possibility. In the course of a long letter to them (we call the passage VII First Corinthians 15) Paul tries to set them right; he insists that the "body" of the resurrection life is a spiritual body, that there is absolutely no continuity between the flesh-and-blood body and this spiritual body except the identity of the wearer. He declares that every Christian who has died since his conversion ("has fallen asleep in Christ" is Paul's beautiful way of expressing it) shall rise as Jesus rose. He does not ask whether the bodies of these dead have been buried, or burned, or devoured by beasts, or sunk in the sea. It makes no smallest difference, since only the soul is concerned. That shall rise from the world of the dead, and God shall give it a body as it pleases him. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. As there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body, and as we bore the one, we shall also bear the other; but the two are wholly distinct. So Paul believes concerning the coming resurrection of every follower of Jesus; so he conceived the resurrection of Jesus himself, as a happening totally unrelated to the flesh and blood which Joseph put into the tomb.

Time passed; Christianity was spreading rapidly among a wonder-loving pagan population. The error which Paul had combated in Corinth became more and more common; the original faith was inevitably

materialized, and resurrection, whether of Jesus or of his followers, conceived as having to do with the physical body. It is the gospel of Mark which first suggests this conception in writing, some fifteen years after Paul had written to the Corinthians, several years, indeed, after Paul's death. The last chapter of Mark closes abruptly with verse 8, though it was originally longer. It tells that Jesus' grave was visited on the Sunday morning after his death by certain women, who found it open and the body gone. But an angel within the tomb announced that Jesus had risen and gone to Galilee, where his disciples should see him.

What shall we say of this story? I believe that we must regard it as wholly legendary, not even founded on fact. It is entirely opposed to every probability of Jewish custom that a group of women should go to open the closed tomb of a man who had been buried the day before yesterday, to complete unfinished burial rites on a body which, in the climate of Jerusalem, must show decomposition already on the third day. That is, to say the least, as little likely in ancient Palestine as in modern America. The angel in this story must be legendary; and if the angel is legendary so is the rest, for the story has no content or coherence at all without the angel. Remove him and his message, and the whole incident collapses. Mark, indeed, in telling the story, betrays that it is a new account, not known in the earlier preaching of the disciples and Paul; he says that the women were so terrified that they said nothing to anyone of their experience.

That is why, thinks Mark, the early church knew nothing of it. No; the whole incident, and the conception behind it, is a product of the pious imagination of an artless and devout Gentile believer. It has come to Mark, we know not how, and been given a place in his Gospel. He wrote, probably, in Rome, and we know something of how religious legends, tales of the saints and the like, spread and grow in Roman Catholic Italy in modern times, even today. How much more in the primitive wonder-loving population nineteen centuries ago?

Once written down by Mark, the legend grows apace. Matthew's gospel, some twenty-five or thirty years later, shows the same idea worked up in much more elaborate fashion. Matthew has the women come out as the Sabbath sun sets, instead of the next morning, and drops the incredible suggestion that they would anoint the body if they could find someone to roll away the stone for them. Instead, they come to see the sepulchre, which Matthew has surrounded with an armed guard. Before the astonished eyes of the women the angel comes down from heaven, rolls away the stone and takes seat upon it, while a mighty earthquake shakes the place and the terrified guards fall in a deathlike stupor to the ground.

All the details of the story, save the angel's message, are wholly unlike those in Mark; the narrative closes with an appearance of Jesus to the disciples on a mountain in Galilee. But the most remarkable thing about Matthew's account is the entire absence of any description or statement that Jesus emerged

from the tomb. The angel removes the stone, but there is no sequel. This central fact, of which all the rest of the narrative is but setting, is more than conspicuous by its absence. There is throughout the whole New Testament this curious avoidance of any direct statement of the revival of Jesus' buried body and its emergence from the tomb. This is probably unconscious on the writers' part, and is a strong evidence of the original view of the resurrection, as concerned with spirit, not with body.

The gospel of Luke, written perhaps a little later than Matthew's, elaborates still further, and with details quite unlike those of either of its predecessors. The three accounts were written independently, with no attempt at agreement; in many points they are in direct contradiction of one another. Luke has two angels instead of one; their message to the women omits all statement that Jesus has gone to Galilee, where the disciples are to see him. On the contrary, Jesus is still in Jerusalem, appears at least three times to disciples there, gives them commandment not to leave the city for the present and finally, before their eyes, is carried up into heaven from the hillside opposite Bethany. His appearances are described in most material terms; he shows the incredulous disciples his hands and feet for them to handle, that they may see he is a creature of flesh and bones, not a ghost. He goes still further, and eats a piece of broiled fish, to demonstrate that he has teeth to chew, a throat to swallow, a digestive apparatus to retain, in other words, that his physical

body is there as before his death. This goes far beyond anything in Matthew or Mark. An incidental, but direct, contradiction of Mark relates to the women's treatment of the angelic message. Mark says very positively, "They told nothing to anyone." Luke says, "They returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest," and repeats the statement in the following verse.

We need not follow these stories further through the Fourth Gospel and the various non-canonical gospels into the church fathers. They are all legends —honest, artless, poetic—but legends, not facts, always in hopeless contradiction one with another, always utterly unrelated to what Jesus and Paul and the earliest Christians meant by the resurrection. None of the disciples were living when these stories spread abroad; no one could contradict them, no one wanted to. This was the first century, not the twentieth. Let us love these stories, understanding how they grew and what they were trying to express. Let us value their use at Easter, if only it is not insisted that we take them as contradictory statements of meaningless facts, rather that as lovely creations of a devout and devoted imagination.

The assured fact that remains after our investigation is that certain of Jesus' followers, after his death, had visions or appearances of him in glorified form. Even Paul, his enemy, had such an appearance.

To the question, What is the real explanation and cause of these appearances? no single answer can be given. Each one must answer such questions accord-

ing to his own world-view, with whatever help the psychologists and students in psychic research can give him. For one thing is quite certain: the accounts of the appearances of Jesus must be considered together with the other accounts of appearances of the dead in all times, down to our own. Some thoughtful persons believe all such phenomena due to hallucination, deception of the senses; many visions are undoubtedly so caused. Others believe that the spirits of the departed may actually appear from their new environment; may, under certain conditions, manifest themselves to human senses. The appearances of Jesus are but one item in a very impressive body of evidence offered in support of this view. But as yet there is no general agreement. In any case, the experiences are real, however caused, and especially in the instance we are discussing, have had enormous influence in human history.

Did Jesus then rise from the dead? Our answer depends on what we mean by rising from the dead. Certainly we cannot mean it literally; it is a first-century phrase, not one of our time. It means a rising from among the dead in the underworld, and we no longer believe in such an underworld. We would probably prefer to say: He passed through death into new life. What happened to him? What do you believe will happen to you when your time comes? What do you believe happened to your dear ones when they passed? As each one answers that question, let him add: *just that* happened to Jesus at his passing. All souls fare on the same journey and are led

from life to life by the same Father. We believe that the human spirit called on earth Jesus was as fully alive after the crucifixion of its body as before; we believe it lives today and will live while God lives. If man is immortal, Jesus was immortal. We have a complete right to believe, on the basis of our records, that his continued life was manifested to men and women still in the flesh. There is much testimony to the same effect concerning other "dead." At any rate, human history entered upon a new epoch when certain humble men and women in Galilee, nineteen centuries ago, looked into each other's glad and startled faces, and cried, "He is risen, as he said."

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

[No. 285]

A Free and Open Christian Church

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D.

Opening Address at Symphony Hall

February 4, 1917

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

A FREE AND OPEN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D.

We have come hither in mass, first, to rejoice and give thanks together for our deliverance from all the creeds, confessions, and dogmas of the older churches and denominations, and from those conceptions of Deity which are implied in the words "propitiation," "expiation," and "vicarious atonement"; and secondly, to congratulate each other that we are able to reverence all saintly lives and to treat with respect all sincere religious beliefs no matter how different the beliefs may be from our own, and no matter how different from our own may be the external manifestations of saintliness. This freedom to respect the practical usefulness of a great variety of religious beliefs is one of our most valued privileges.

We also have come together here with the purpose of proclaiming what the affirmative or positive beliefs are which inspire the Unitarian churches, and guide Unitarians in the conduct of their lives. We wish to do this, because we recognize the plain fact that no religion and no religious denomination can be greatly useful to society and civilization unless it is animated by warm, positive convictions carried into practice. Ours is no cool and negative religion. On the contrary, it is a steady fire, a glowing hope, an invigorating inspiration.

We believe in a loving God who inspires and vivifies the universe, and to that God we attribute in an infinite degree all the finest, noblest, sweetest, loveliest qualities which human nature embodies and displays in finite forms. For us God is not a despotic ruler, a judge, just or unjust, or a lord of embattled hosts. He is for us a Father Divine; and the word "father" signifies for us the best human combination of justice, tenderness, and intimate sympathy.

We Unitarians believe in the essential dignity and goodness of human nature; and Boston is the place to reaffirm that belief, for here Channing preached that fundamental doctrine in purest form.

For and with fellow-men we believe in good-will, co-operation for common ends, and freedom from all restraints and subjections except those involved in preserving the same freedom for the neighbor.

We recognize that there are great evils in the world; but we refuse to accept them as inevitable, and we combat them with every form of intelligent human effort, and with every means which modern science puts into our hands.

We believe in the prevention of evil by destroying its spawn and digging up its roots, and in educating and reforming the wrong-doer rather than merely punishing him.

We recognize that human wills are often weak, and human bodies and minds often defective; but we do not infer thence that the human race is depraved, and is to be controlled and redeemed only by fear or terror.

We believe that mankind would get along better than they do now, if it were positively known that the heaven of Revelation had been burnt and hell quenched.

With all our hearts we believe in, and would fain imitate the Good Samaritan, the father of the prodigal son, Martha and Mary, especially Martha, the publican who would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, the poor widow who cast in two mites, and that disciple whom Jesus loved, and to whom he said as he hung on the cross, "Behold thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home."

We believe in the lilies of the field, and accept their testimony to the nature of the God that made them so beautiful, and us capable of enjoying them.

We believe in the little children of whom Jesus said, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven," and in that kind of heaven.

We believe most earnestly and completely in the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, and the rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

We believe that all men need to reverence, to worship, and to love.

We believe in the spiritual interpretations and sanctions of duty, obligation, and responsibility.

We believe that to whom much is given, of them much is expected or required; and that the sense of obligation is strongest in a grateful conscience.

For Unitarians, these beliefs are as warm and in-

spiring and as fruitful in character and conduct as any the world knows.

Therefore, we mean and try to love God and our neighbor, to love mercy, to help the desolate and the wronged, to seek the truth, and, finding any, to speak it and act it out.

Finally, this meeting, held at a time when the whole world has been witnessing the complete failure of all the established Christian institutions founded on Roman imperialism, the feudal system, compromises in barbaric councils, and the historical creeds and confessions, to prevent or to mitigate the most horrible outbreak of savagery the world has ever known, hopes to suggest to the unchurched millions in this country and to the other millions who are restless in the churches to which they belong through inheritance or through beloved associations, that there exists in the world another church, open and free from all bonds of opinion or belief, in which honest minds and loving hearts may find support in the high enterprise of living a candid intellectual life, and a sincere religious life, a church which sanctifies and blesses by prayer and praise the great events of common human life, birth, marriage, and death, a church which prompts all its members to serviceable and honorable lives, and to communion with sweet and noble souls, living or dead, and with the God of whom Jesus said, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Every living church is a fellowship. Listen to the simple terms on which any youth or maiden, any man

or woman, any family or group of families may join any Unitarian church: "In the freedom of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus Christ we unite for the worship of God and the service of man." Listen to this statement of the Unitarian faith, our only confession: "The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Leadership of Jesus, Salvation by Character, the Progress of Mankind onward and upward forever."

In these days of disastrous failure on the part of the established religions and of profound disappointment for their adherents, we hear many people saying that there is no place in the world—and never has been—for an open, free, unauthoritative Christianity, and that most people prefer to have their religion prescribed by Deity direct, or by Deity through a supernaturally directed Church, or by an inspired priesthood. Unitarians admit that there are many persons of that way of thinking, which is often hereditary or traditional, and they are quite aware that such persons do not belong in their fellowship, and would not be comfortable in it; but Unitarians also think they see three great new forces at work which will before long produce multitudes of adherents for an open Christian Church in which dogmatism, supernaturalism, and ecclesiasticism have no place. These three forces are: the modern religious poetry, the triumphant truth-seeking of Science in all its branches or departments, and the advancing democracy in governments, industries, and all civilized society.

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